Short Stories.

CORONATION NUMBER.

No. 704.) Week Ending June 28, 1902. (Price One Penny.

With a startled cry she turned and looked up into his face, writhing under his strong grasp. Suddenly her face grew pale as death. Their eyes had met, and from beneath the helmet came the words, hoarsely uttered: "MY GOD! MY LITTLE SISTER!"

Digitized by Google

KAPUTINE cures
NEURALGIA equally as well as
HEADACHE.
KAPUTINE is USED
as well as recommended by MEDICAL MEN!

PACKETS OF 18 1/- FOR KAPUTINE THE SAFE REMEDY FOR HEADACHE CURES IN 10 MINUTES.

NOTHING LIKE IT OR AS GOOD

To convince sufferers of the sterling value of KAPUTINE we will send a supply FREE by return on receipt of Stamped Envelope

C. G. KAPUTINE, HUDDERSFIELD.

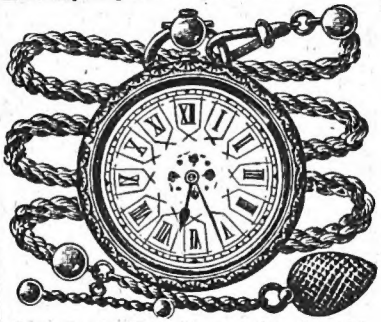
'LET'S TALK OF GRAVES' Shakespeare.

SPECIAL OFFER.

Lady's Silver Watch and Albert for 30/-

TERMS. 3/- with order, and balance by monthly payments of 3s.

DESCRIPTION. Sterling Silver Watch with horizontal movement fitted with all modern improvements and Fully Jewelled; Handsomely Finished Opal Dial Decorated and Embellished in High-class Style; Artistically Designed Sterling Silver Cases. Warranted Five Years.



Very Neat Two-row Sterling Silver Albert, with Bar and Drop Piece.

Watch and .. Albert complete in Elegant Case. 30/-

Send for our No. 1 Catalogue of Watches, Clocks, Jewellery, Cutlery and Plate, Fancy Goods, etc., etc., Post Free.

Good Agents Wanted in spare time. Persons in regular employment should apply for terms and particulars.

J. G. GRAVES, 69 Division St., SHEFFIELD.

JUNO CYCLES ARE THE VERY BEST FOR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. Free Wheels.

£7-15-0 or 14/2 Monthly.

Carriage paid to all parts. CASH or 12 monthly payments.

£7 15s. ... 14/2
£8 8s. ... 15/0
£9 10s. ... 17/1
£9 15s ... 17/6
£11 0s. ... 20/0
£12 0s. ... 21/8

Bowden Brakes, 13/11; A1 Rim Brake, 6/6; Scorcher Brake, 1/-. Burdick Cyclometer, 1/9. Write at once for New Season's List of over 100 pages and over 500 illustrations of JUNO CYCLES and latest cycling accessories at lower prices than any other house. Sent Post Free. METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS Co. Ltd., S.Y. Dept., 75 Bishopsgate Street, Without, London, E.C., and Piccadilly Circus, London, W.

From 1s. weekly. Special Offer. £12 15s 0d. Sample for £6 6s. Carriage paid. PLATED RIMS, FREE WHEELS, RIM BRAKE FITTED FREE. Agents wanted. — DEREHAM ROAD CYCLE CO., NORWICH.

KEATING'S POWDER KILLS BUGS FLEAS FLIES BEETLES

TINS 3d. 6d. 1s-BELLOWS 9d.

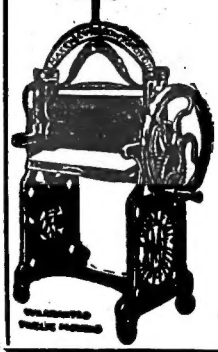
ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently by taking TRILENE TABLETS (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send 2s. 6d. to THE TRILENE CO., Sole Proprietors 66 Pinsbury Pavement, London.

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 103 Dixon Street New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."



THIS WRINGER SENT FOR 2/6

1/- PER WEEK.

PRICE 54/6

CASH 45s.

Send 2/6 Deposit, we then forward it at once, carriage paid, and you pay 1/- weekly or 2/- fortnightly, until paid for.

Write for Catalogue of Furniture and other Goods.

MAXEY & CO., Meadow St., Sheffield.

AGENTS WANTED.

You Can Dress Better and Save Money By using

MAYPOLE SOAP

Colours 4d. per cake

WHICH DYES ANY COLOUR

Black 6d. per cake

BRILLIANT—DURABLE—FAST—ECONOMICAL.

Curtains, Blouses, Frocks, Silks, and Satins made to look like new.

NO MESS—NO TROUBLE.

Send for Free Booklet "THE PERFECTION OF HOME DYEING" to the Maypole Co. 17 Cumming Street London, N.

Short Stories

No. 704.] [One Penny.

For the Week Ending June 28th, 1902.

LOVE OR DUTY?

A Story of Coronation Day.

Everybody declared that Netta Dunstan was the prettiest girl in the village of Matterly, and, for once in a way, everybody was right. Netta was so exceedingly pretty that even when she went, on market days, into the nearest country town, many heads were turned to watch her walk down the High Street, and it was, perhaps, small wonder that the girl was not free from vanity.

It was useless for her mother to grumble because Netta did far less work in the small farmhouse than did either of her sisters; Netta merely tossed her head when her mother remonstrated with her, and said in plain and forcible English that she had no intention of slaving as a sort of farm hand, but had loftier ambitions and higher hopes. Mrs. Dunstan sighed and talked to the girl without effect. Mr. Dunstan scolded, also ineffectually, but then he found his pretty daughter well-nigh irresistible when she smiled bewitchingly into his face and pouted her rosy lips at him.

Joe—Netta's elder brother, destined for the Metropolitan Police Force, and as steady and reliable a person as Netta was the reverse—had more influence over the wilful girl than the rest of the family, but even Joe was only too easily twisted round those small, useless fingers of hers, which had a way of twining themselves round his neck in most ingratiating fashion when his sister particularly wanted her own way.

Yes! Netta certainly was very pretty, and very fascinating, and, gazing at the forget-me-not blue of her eyes, the briar-rose tints of her complexion, and the soft, fair masses of her hair, you were inclined to overlook the weakness of mouth and chin, which betokened a corresponding weakness of character.

The girl's home lay on a breezy hillside, in one of the loveliest of English counties—an old-fashioned farmhouse, set back in a delicious garden, where, in June the tall white lilies mingled their fragrance with the roses that rioted over the house, and along the fence.

A happy home, scores of friends, more than her share of admirers, no girl had less reason than Netta to be restless and discontented. And yet her eyes were full of a longing for she knew not what; discontent was actually making little fretful lines about her mouth by the time she was eighteen!

"Netta is never satisfied. Nothing ever seems to please Netta." These remarks were frequently made by members of her family, and the girl's retort was always the same.

"Satisfied? No, I should think I wasn't satisfied to waste my life and eat my heart out in this deadly dull place, when there's a world worth living in outside. I never *shall* be satisfied here!" The last sentence was spoken with vehemence to her brother Joe, on a summer evening during his first holiday from London.

"Whatever is it you want to do?" he asked. "There's many girls would be thankful to have a home like yours, and plenty to eat, and that!"

"*Plenty to eat!*" Netta interrupted him scornfully. "Do you think girls are always thinking of their stomachs, same as men are? Why, I am sick of being well off. Let me have a chance of getting on, and doing things, and I'd cheerfully starve!"

Joe looked at her in silence for a moment. Life in the great metropolis had taught the silent, country-bred man many strange lessons. It gave him what he called a "queer turn in his inside," to hear his sister talking in this reckless way—he laid a hand gently on her arm.

"Don't talk like that, Netta," he said, "thank God you don't know what starving means, else you'd never speak lightly of it. I've seen a goodish bit of misery and wretchedness since I've been in London, and I can't bear to hear you talk as if—as if——"

"There, you old silly!" Netta broke in again, "*I'm* not likely to starve, or anything of that sort. Why, I've been told that, with my face, I could get on well in London."

"Get on well in London? What do you mean?" Joe's voice was as stern as his gentle nature would allow of its being, and he looked into his little sister's flower-like face that was upraised to his, recoiling with a sick horror at the thought of her plunging into the whirlpool of London life.

"What do I mean?" she repeated, tossing her head. "Why, I mean that a very nice gentleman, staying with the Chambers last week, told me that I ought to do well on the stage. Those were his very words—'You ought to do well on the stage,' he said, and so I shall, you'll see."

"I don't want to see anything of the sort," Joe gripped his sister's hand. "You wouldn't surely think of such a thing, would you, dear? It would break father's and mother's hearts if you were to go away. And there's a lot of hardships and temptations and difficulties on the stage that you know nothing about. Why don't you buckle to, and make up your mind to settle down here and be as happy as the others are?"

She laughed a shrill little laugh that hurt her brother.

"Well, as you seem so against my plans I just shan't confide them to you," she said mischievously. "When I do go away I shan't tell you anything about it—don't you be afraid!" and no persuasions or coaxings of Joe's would make her say anything different.

All the obstinacy that makes a weak character belonged to

All rights reserved.]

Netta, and flattered by a passing compliment, forgotten as soon as uttered by the man who made it, she began not only to build castles in the air but to form practical plans for escaping from the life she detested into what she was sure would be fuller, more interesting, and blissfully free.

That brilliant successes awaited her she was convinced; the world had only to see her, and it would instantly be at her feet, so ran the vain musings of the foolish girl, with this result—that one morning Mary Dunstan (Netta's elder sister) came into the kitchen with a white face and shaking voice, saying:

"Mother, Netta has never been to bed all night. Her room is empty, her bed has not been slept in, and we cannot find her anywhere. Here is a note from her for you."

The note was very short:

"Dear Mother," it ran, "I am going away to make my fortune as others have done before me. I shall not come back until I have done it.—Your loving daughter,

"NETTA."

The blow fell like a thunderbolt upon the peaceful homestead. Where could Netta have gone? What was she going to do? Why, ah, why had she left those who loved her in this selfish, reckless way?

These were the questions asked by Netta's father and mother, and by her sisters, but, alas, no answer came to their questionings, only the sickness of hope deferred, and of suspense that never ended in certainty. Everything that their simple wits could devise was done to discover the whereabouts of the missing girl. The kind old rector of Matterly prosecuted the most searching inquiries in every direction, but all in vain. Netta had vanished—vanished as completely as though the earth had swallowed her up and although the days after her departure slipped into weeks, and the weeks into months and years, no tidings of her reached her sorrowing family; the place where she had been all her life knew her no more.

* * * * *

It was Coronation Day!

The day for which the Empire had waited with growing expectation broke at last, and long before the first grey light of dawn crept over the housetops, London awoke, and knots of people had begun to assemble along the route to the Abbey. Ere the sun was up, the small isolated knots had swollen into closely packed crowds, prepared to stand patiently through the long hours yet to pass, before the coming of the King and Queen.

The crowd was good-tempered and cheery enough, as an English crowd always is. To vary the monotonous time of waiting, patriotic songs were lustily sung, harmless chaff was levied at those who were struggling to houses and stands, cheers were given for the bodies of soldiers who clattered by on horse and foot, and who, as the moments slipped by, began to take up their positions in front of the thronging multitudes.

The scene was one of brilliance and beauty never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. In the background the grey pile of Westminster stood out against the clear blueness of the June sky, the building walled in, as it were, by a solid mass of gaily-dressed folk upon the stands. Below them stood that wonderfully patient crowd, motley of colour, keen of face, cheery of aspect, and between the crowd and the wide roadway came the lines of soldiers, vivid splashes of colour so far as eye could see.

Amongst the hundreds of police on duty for the occasion on that eventful day, Joe Dunstan was numbered, and a proud and happy man he was when he took up his position at the back of the crowd, close to the place where a small street debouched into the main thoroughfare, and into which the rapidly swelling multitude already began to encroach.

If Joe's face was less rosy, and his air less countrified than in the old days at Matterly, he made up for it by his added breadth of chest and well set-up appearance, and there was a certain steadfastness in his eyes and a cheery self-reliance in his bearing that made him very good to look upon, and convinced an onlooker that he must be a most trustworthy individual—which, indeed, he was.

He whistled softly to himself as he regulated the vagaries of the crowd, and though his eyes were ever on the alert, his smile made those about him feel that even if he were regulating their behaviour, he did it so good-naturedly that all the sting of unpleasantness was taken out of the restrictions he imposed.

The hours dragged on, the crowd thickened, and the moment for which an Empire waited breathlessly came at last.

From far away a faint sound of cheering was borne upon the air, and the sound swelled into a roar that made men think of the Atlantic surges beating upon a rocky shore. The sun flashed upon the waving plumes of the Horse Guards, and shone back from their gleaming helmets like the passing of a breeze over a field of wheat, the great multitude of men and women behind the soldiers swayed forward.

Joe Dunstan choked with the rest, an unaccustomed dimness for which he could not account clouded his clear eyes, emotions inexplicable to his simple soul swept over him, and his face flashed round as the other faces flashed, to see the King pass by!

Then, all in a moment, he was recalled to a sense of his duties, and of the every day, for, just in front of him, on the rim of the swaying crowd, he saw a girl, evidently unimpressed by the greatness of the occasion, slip a hand into the pocket of an old gentleman, who was far too much absorbed in waving his hat in the air to take heed whether his pocket was picked or no.

But Joe, on the alert once more, saw the incident perfectly, and took two rapid steps in the direction of the girl and her victim. Her back was turned to Joe, and a swift pang of compunction shot through his kindly heart as he saw her stooping figure, her miserable rags, her air of want and misery.

"Poor creature," he thought sadly, "just got to the fag end of everything, I daresay; driven to this, maybe, by hunger and wretchedness."

Joe's life in London had had no hardening effect upon him, very much the reverse. He was more than ever pitiful towards all sorrow and sin, and especially so towards sinning and suffering womanhood.

Loving memories of the pretty little sister he had loved and lost, made all women sacred in his eyes, and it was with something very like regret that he elbowed his way through the people round him, and laid a heavy but gentle hand on the shoulder of the girl he had been watching.

With a startled cry she turned, and looked up into his face, writhing under his grasp, her own face full of fear and dismay.

"I'm not doing anything; I swear I'm not doing any harm; I—don't——"

The words died on her lips; her face grew pale as death; her wide, terrified eyes were fixed upon her captor with an awful fear in their depths, and but for Joe's arm she would have tottered and fallen.

"My God! My little sister!"

His own healthy, bronzed face blanched; he felt as though he were wrapped in the folds of some hideous nightmare from

Digitized by Google

which there was no escape; the historic scene about him—the shouting multitudes, the glory and the pageant faded from his eyes, and he only saw—Netta's face!

Netta's face it was—but changed, degraded, altered almost out of all recognition. Almost, not quite, for her brother knew her!

In spite of the ravages wrought by time and trouble, her brother knew her still.

Her blue eyes were faded and dim; the hair, of which she had been so proud, hung in limp disorder about her pale and miserable face. Lines of sin and want were carved about her mouth, and the cheeks that had been fresh and lovely as a briar rose were white and sunken now. She wore a miscellaneous collection of rags, fastened at haphazard, and a battered hat was on her head. She presented an appearance of such forlorn misery that a wild hope ran through Joe's mind that the old gentleman whose pocket she had picked might forbear from giving her in charge.

"Surely," the kind policeman thought, "no one would wish to punish a girl so wretched—and on Coronation Day, too!"

But the old gentleman was not possessed of so kindly a heart as was Joe. He wormed himself out of the crowd, and came to where Joe and his captive stood, indignation gleaming in his small steely eyes, and glowing in every feature of his speaking countenance.

"I give that young woman in charge, constable," he stuttered fiercely; "disgraceful that on a day like this, when his gracious Majesty——"

Anger did not allow him to finish his sentence, and before he could speak again, Netta had flung herself free of Joe's restraining arm hand, and grasped the arm of the angry old gentleman.

"Oh, sir, forgive me!" she cried passionately, "forgive me, forgive me. It was the first time, and I am starving. I have tried to be honest, indeed, indeed, I have, but I am starving, forgive me!"

"Tut, tut," the old gentleman exclaimed, shaking himself free of her hand; "take the young woman away, constable. First time, indeed! Take her away. If she is starving, no doubt they will give her food at the station, and feed her well in prison. I give her in charge, and here is my card."

Thrusting his card into Joe's reluctant hand, the old man turned away, to resume a place amongst the sightseers, and Joe and his sitser were left side by side.

He had laid a gentle hand on her shoulder again, and now drew her away from the crowd of staring eyes, saying—

"You must come along now."

He spoke firmly, almost sternly, whilst the many-eared multitude still swayed about them, but when they reached a quiet corner in a deserted street, he stopped and spoke very softly.

"Netta," he said, brokenly, "I can't believe it—even now I can't believe it."

"Oh, it's all right!" she answered recklessly. "I did it all right. I meant to rob the silly old thing. I tell you, as I told him, I'm hungry, hungry, hungry. I don't suppose you know what that means, but I do, and it hurts. Well! I don't care. They'll feed me in prison anyhow, won't they? The old beast said they'd feed me there, so just take me along quick, it's all right"—and she broke into a shrill peal of mirthless laughter, that made Joe's heart ache to breaking point.

"Queer, isn't it?" she went on, after a minute, with again that hard reckless laugh, "a brother taking a sister in charge! That doesn't often happen, I'll be bound. My goodness, it's a sort of a record case, isn't it?"

"*Don't* talk and laugh like that, dear," he said. "I can't bear to hear you."

She checked the wild laughter that still rose to her lips, and looked up into his kindly face with hard miserable eyes.

"You have always been such a good chap," she said at last. "And I—I was always bad." A little sob caught her throat, her laughter died utterly away. Looking into Joe's clear, loving eyes, some of the bitter misery about her heart melted for the first time in many and many a long day—and a longing to cry, which she had not experienced for years, swept over her.

"You're just the same, Joe," she said, after a pause, in a shaking voice. "London hasn't taught you all the awful things it has taught me."

A great bitterness rang through her voice; Joe looked at her pitifully.

"Poor little girl," he said tenderly, "poor little girl."

The gentle voice, the tender words, opened the flood gates of Netta's hardened heart. Something in his words brought back to her old memories out of the long ago, stirring within her a thought of the old home on the hillside, and of days when her elder brother had guided her toddling, childish steps with strong and tender hand, picking her up when she fell, and soothing her fears with those same loving words, "Poor little girl, poor little girl."

Dropping her face into her hands she broke into a passion of sobs, crying out as the tears rained through her fingers—

"I've never been sorry before, not in all these years, I've never been sorry. It's your face and your eyes, and your kind voice make me sorry now. I wish I'd been a better girl, Joe—I wish——"

"You'll have to begin again, won't you, dear?" he said kindly and awkwardly; "there's always a chance to begin again."

"Begin again?" she echoed drearily. "After prison and disgrace, shall I get a chance to begin well? Better be dead than disgraced. I wish I was dead—oh! I wish I was dead."

Her voice grew fierce and reckless again, and Joe's eyes grew dim. A great conflict raged within his soul—the conflict between love and duty.

To give his little sister in charge was as hard—nay, harder, than to plunge a knife into his own heart; yet to neglect his duty seemed terrible to the man whose faithfulness and loyalty had made him a by-word in the force.

His little sister! His pretty little sister, whom he loved. How could he hand her over to justice? What irony of fate was it that had thrust this hateful task upon him? Instinctively he realised that disgrace would infallibly be the final step in Netta's downward path. She would emerge from prison a worse and more hardened woman than she entered it. Nothing in all her reckless life would have so bad an effect upon her as to suffer the penalty of the law.

But on the other hand, if he failed in his duty, if he did not give her in charge, so flagrant and glaring a dereliction would merit the severest censure and punishment, and Joe's conception of his duty was of a very high order. To do it faithfully was his chief ambition, to fail in it would seem to him an eternal disgrace.

And yet—his little sister! His little sister!

"How did it all happen?" he asked her suddenly and abruptly. "How did you come to *this?*" His eyes glanced at her ragged garments, her dishevelled appearance.

A great shame made her hang her head, and brought a flood of crimson to her white face.

"I sank by degrees," she whispered. "I ran away from home, thinking I should make a name and a fortune. I was sure I must get on. I wouldn't tell you or anyone where I went. I've been through——," she cried passionately. "Ah! Joe! tell all silly girls like me to stop safe at home, and leave this great, ugly, wicked world alone. I got on the stage, and I went into the provinces, and the work and the travelling and hardships nearly killed me. Then I lost my looks, and nobody wanted me without them. When I wasn't pretty any more I could get no work, and so I drifted—down, down, down—into the depths. I know the lowest of them! I've

Digitized by Google

eaten the bread that had been thrown away into the gutters! I've hunted the dustbins in the early morning to find scraps of food." Joe uttered a low exclamation of horror, but she went on drearily, "I've slept under archways and on doorsteps. I know all the worst that life has got to give, but I never stole until to-day. I couldn't bring myself to do it. I never stole till to-day, and I was so hungry. Joe—can't you save me now?"

The words rang in his ears and pulled at his heart strings.

"Can't you save me now?"

The conflict between love and duty raged yet more wildly in his soul.

"I give her in charge."

"Can't you save me now?"

The two sentences danced before his eyes in letters of fire, until he felt as though he no longer knew right from wrong.

All at once the quiet of the peaceful street in which they stood was ruthlessly disturbed. A great surging crowd, driven from some other vantage ground, and trying to find an outlet somewhere, swept down upon them.

As the multitude rolled down the little street like some relentless flood, a sudden flash of illumination came to Joe, and all in a second he made his choice, whether for good or evil he felt he should never be able to decide.

Stooping over Netta, he whispered in her ear——

"When the crowd come round us, I shall take my hand off your shoulder. Then go. And—and, Netta, dear—go home—with this."

He pressed a coin into her hand, then he drew a long breath, whether of relief or pain he would have found it hard to say himself, and the next moment the crowd closed round them!

His hand slipped from the girl's shoulder; he turned away from her, and elbowed his way through the people, who were too intent on pushing into a main thoroughfare to pay any attention to Joe's white face and strained, fixed glance, whilst he was intent only on appearing to be busy in stemming the torrent of humanity that streamed past him.

His heart beat in heavy thuds that were almost painful; his hand was clenched so tightly that the nails actually dug themselves into the flesh; his eyes saw only Netta's changed, worn face, his ears heard only her pleading cry.

"Can't you save me now?" and though his brain throbbed, the aching thought that for the first time in his years of faithful service he had failed to do his duty!

* * * * * *

On the next morning, when Joe Dunstan with a heavy heart was preparing for his day's work, a telegram was put into his hands. He tore it open hurriedly, and read these words——

"I have come home. God bless you.—Netta."

A sob rose in his throat and nearly choked him; there was a mist before his eyes, but his soul sung with gladness too great for words.

"Thank God!" he thought, "thank God! I believe I acted rightly; I cannot say for certain, but I believe I acted rightly. 'Twas a hard fight between love and duty, and—love won!"

L. G. Moberly.

A CHANGED DECISION.

Riches Pave the Way of the Course which Seldom Runs Smooth.

Walston Crone was a Member of Parliament, and a very wealthy man. Although he had once been poor himself, since he had acquired riches he felt contempt for poor people, and thought them little better than the worms of the earth.

At the moment we introduce him to the reader he was walking from one end of his study to the other, to the creaking accompaniment of his own boots, while in peremptory tones he dictated letters to his secretary, a young man with a handsome, high-bred face and a serene repose of expression.

"If you have finished that, write this!" said Walston Crone, curtly, and in jerky fashion he dictated the following letter:

"Dear Lowden,—As my present secretary will be leaving me within a week, you will do me a favour by recommending someone to take his place. I want a gentleman who will not abuse my confidence. I do not want a presumptuous puppy. Yours truly,"

Not a muscle of the young man's face moved; he wrote the letter, added it to those already awaiting his employer's signature, and spread a fresh sheet of paper on the desk before him with an imperturbable calm that irritated the great man. His grey eyes sparkled, his thin lips became a mere line, and he galloped full speed along the road of wrath.

"Have you anything to say, Marsden? If so, remember that time, and not eternity, is at your disposal!"

"I have only to say that you might have found a less ingenious way of letting me know that my services are to be dispensed with immediately."

"I am not aware of any reason why you should receive special consideration. I have found you to be a presumptuous puppy, and I treat you as one! Your conduct has obliged me to send my daughter away from home, or, I should rather say, from your impertinent scheming! You—you unmitigated upstart!"

"Suppose we discuss the matter like gentlemen, Mr. Crone? I love your daughter with all my heart, and I am proud to say that she loves me. You have nothing against me but my want of money, and until lately you appeared willing to overlook that. Certainly, some time must elapse before I can be in a position to offer Natalie a fitting home."

"Any fool knows that!" said Mr. Crone.

"I am glad you agree with me so far," returned Marsden, suavely. "She is quite willing to wait. Will you forgive me if I say that you have treated me rather unfairly? How? Well, by tacitly approving my suit until a richer man appeared."

Walston Crone was speechless, and made a singularly undignified exit.

In certain circumstances there is nothing in the world so aggravating as the simple truth.

* * * * * * *

"Natalie, who is that impudent young man who has begun to haunt our daily drives?"

Readers should turn at once to page 806, and read "Confessions of Cynthia," the splendid new series of stories revealing the secrets of high life.

Digitized by Google

"Do you imply that I am acquainted with impudent young men, Mrs. Hungerford?" inquired Natalie.

"My dear, that is an evasion. It may be as well to tell me all about it—or him. For I am certain there is something behind your father's request that I look after you for a time. I am sure he did not deprive himself of your charming company simply to confer it on me," said the middle-aged lady, with a significant nod and a kindly glance from her still fine eyes.

She was a good-natured, wealthy woman, with little or nothing to do with her time and money, and with a more or less praiseworthy desire to make her own life and her own surroundings as pleasant as possible.

Walston Crone had made her acquaintance in London only a year ago, and, having a high opinion of her shrewdness, had placed his only daughter in her hands, feeling certain that she would soon cure the girl of her silly romance, and inspire her with a fitting esteem of the pomps and vanities which money alone can provide.

Natalie looked at her chaperon thoughtfully for several moments.

"That young man, who is by no means impudent, was my father's secretary."

"And is——"

"My intended husband. I have promised to wait for him until his position justifies our being married. It may interest you to hear something of his personal history. His mother married in opposition to the wishes of her family—ran away, as probably I shall have to do, with a poor man. She was left a widow with a family very inadequately provided for. She did not long survive her husband, so the burden of responsibility fell on Gerard's shoulders. Do you understand? He has been fighting life's battles for his younger brothers and sisters."

"Your father would say that there is a great moral lesson in that story, my dear—a solemn warning against improvident matches. If your Gerard's mother had married prudently, her children would have inherited riches, and he would have been spared years of uncongenial work and sordid anxiety."

"I shall be proud to share his lot, whether high or humble. I am not posing as a revolted daughter, Mrs. Hungerford. The fact of the matter is that at first father actually smiled upon us, and only changed his aspect when a horrid old man who has made a fortune in pickles had the audacity to admire me. Of course, I was sent here out of Gerard's way, and now father has dismissed him."

"Ah!" exclaimed the elder lady, rather dryly. "By the way, what is his name?"

"Gerard Marsden."

"Gerard Marsden, did you say? The name seems somewhat familiar to me—to be connected with my younger days. I wonder what his mother's name was before she married. Do you know, Natalie?"

"Yes—it was Seyton—Lillian Seyton."

Mrs. Hungerford closed her eyes and laid her head slowly back on the cushions of the carriage. Her years, her experience, her lassitude, her worldliness, fell away from her.

Then she sat upright, and glanced at the ardent young face beside her with a new expression of her own.

"Your father is coming to Bournemouth next week," she said; "before that time I wish you to ask Mr. Gerard Marsden to come and see me—me, remember, not you!"

* * * * * * * *

Mr. Crone arrived at Bournemouth in high good humour.

Never had he more keenly appreciated the luxury of Mrs. Hungerford's palatial mansion; never had its costly appointments, its air of ease and unlimited prosperity, filled him with a livelier sense of satisfaction.

Mrs. Hungerford received him graciously.

"Natalie is spending a week with the Kissams, and is as happy as a queen!" she said.

"Thanks to your kindness and your good sense!"

"Well—no, not altogether!" The lady gazed thoughtfully into space. "We are friends, Mr. Crone, are we not?" she murmured softly. "You think well of me, don't you?"

Was she about to propose? He had heard of widows availing themselves of the leap year privilege out of season.

"Ah, my dear Mrs. Hungerford, 'think well' very, very inadequately expresses the more than respect and admiration I entertain for you."

"And yet, Mr. Crone, you did not scruple to turn my nephew out of your house at a moment's notice!"

"Why, Mrs. Hungerford, you astound me! I do not even know your nephew!"

"My good man, you know Gerard Marsden!" exclaimed the lady, revelling in the situation.

"Don't call me a good man!" cried the M.P., with natural resentment.

Mrs. Hungerford, good-humouredly, but with a touch of sarcasm, apologised for her mistake.

"Gerard Marsden entered my employ and my home on false pretences," continued Mr. Crone. "He has deceived me as to his position. He led me to suppose that he was without influential relatives. He has been in receipt of a handsome salary which he did not need, thereby depriving another——"

"Before you complete your summing up, Mr. Crone, allow me to say that it is only within the last few days that he and I have known of each other's existence. Gerard's mother was my sister—the beauty and pet of the family; she married against father's will and without his consent, and he disowned her. He prohibited all communication with her, and she was practically dead to us. I married Mr. Hungerford, and my long residence in Scotland prevented me from endeavouring to find my sister when I felt myself no longer bound by paternal prohibition. I am childless, as you know. Gerard Marsden is my heir. It is my intention to settle an adequate income on him at once. Now, Mr. Crone, will you still forbid the banns?"

The M.P. rose to the occasion nobly.

"Mrs. Hungerford," he said, "the mere fact of Gerard Marsden being your nephew removes every objection to his marriage with Natalie. May they be happy!"

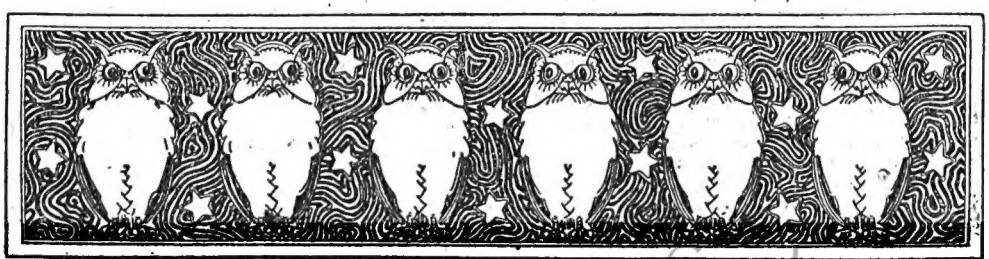
Mrs. Hungerford concealed a smile with one plump, jewelled hand; Walston Crone possessed himself of the other.

"So fair, so generous!" he said. "You have given them joy—will not you be kind to me as well? You have made the deepest impression on my heart. Be my wife—my adored, idolised wife!"

Mrs. Hungerford slightly shuddered as she drew herself away.

"Mr. Crone, I have experienced one loveless marriage, and that experience suffices!"

M. Chalmers.



Digitized by Google

THE CONFESSIONS OF CYNTHIA.

Revelations in High Life by a Lady's Companion.

The writer of this series of true stories acted for many years in the capacity of lady's companion to a Society adventuress who lived by robbing her unsuspecting guests. Names have, for obvious reasons, been altered, but the facts are correct.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS:

Mrs. NORTON	An adventuress who makes her money by robbing her friends.
CYNTHIA	Her cousin and companion who, when the events related below took place, was quite unsuspicious of Mrs. Norton's guilt.
FLUFFY	An accomplice of Mrs. Norton's.
LORD KINROSS	One of Mrs. Norton's most devoted admirers.
SIR JOHN STRICKLAND	A poor baronet who is deeply in love with Mrs. Norton.
MARY VERNON . . .	At one time engaged to be married to Lord Kinross.
HIRAM PETTIGREW .	An American millionaire.
PERCIVAL HOPE . . .	Pettigrew's secretary.

Mrs. Norton: Adventuress.

Cynthia: Her companion.

"HE SUSPECTS; MAKE HASTE."

FOR THE BENEFIT OF NEW READERS.

CYNTHIA tells in the opening chapter of her arrival at her cousin's in the capacity of companion, and of her discovery that Mrs. Norton is taking part in midnight card games, at which large sums of money are being lost and won. The climax is reached one night when Mary Vernon stakes her diamond ear-rings (a gift from Lord Kinross) and one of the onlookers finds them to be paste. Mary Vernon declares that they are exactly as given to her by Lord Kinross, whereupon Kinross breaks off the engagement. The diamonds subsequently appear as a gift from Fluffy to Mrs. Norton, set in a pair of hat-pins. A few weeks later the notorious Mrs. Norton, with Fluffy's help, succeeds in stealing a pocket-book, containing about eight thousand pounds in paper money, from Hiram Pettigrew at the Café Regal, by substituting for the millionaire's pocket-book one exactly like it. Later on Cynthia discovers the original pocket-book, empty of course, in one of her boxes.

FOR some minutes I did not touch the pocket-book, but let it lie where it had fallen on my lap. I stared half fascinated at the green and silver thing, too stupefied at finding it in my box to wonder how it came there. Not until I had opened the book, and the initials "H. P." in the millionaire's favourite scrawl, stared at me from inside the flap, did I awake.

Then in a panic I crept on tiptoe to the door and locked it; no one must come into my room while *that* was lying there. Fitfully I walked to and fro, half crying in my terror. All the tales I had heard of innocent girls accused and convicted of theft came back to me. I saw myself on trial, found guilty, and sent to prison. Useless to protest my innocence, the thing was *there*.

Suddenly, in the midst of my distress, there flashed across my mind the fact that Hiram Pettigrew had lost not his pocket-book but its contents.

To whom then did this book that I had found belong?

I picked it up carefully and took out the contents—some telegraph forms, an old envelope or two, and a press cutting. The articles were identical with those found in the pocket-book from which the notes had been extracted?

Yes; but had they been extracted.

Like a flash the solution of the problem came to me. The millionaire's pocket-book had been taken bodily, and another—similar in appearance and filled with papers such as he was wont to carry—substituted.

So far my reasoning seemed complete, but I had yet to trace the book from the Café Regal to my box at the Cecil. Strange that the thief had not destroyed the proof of his guilt. And yet was it a proof? If so, I should be held guilty, for the thief had transferred the book to me.

Who had done this cruel thing? I recollected the evening of the theft; the supper at the Café, Fluffy's illness, the disappearance of the pocket-book, our search, and my delight in finding it.

But I had found it—where? Between my chair and Percival Hope's. Close on the thought came the recollection of the strange look Frances had given the secretary, when Pettigrew declared—"someone" had stolen his property. Could it be—I glanced round fearfully—was it possible Percival Hope was the thief?

The thought was terrible; it hurt like a physical pain. It was not credible that he could act so meanly. The best of men might yield to a great temptation and commit theft, but only a low and base nature would seek to shift their guilt on to the shoulders of a friendless girl. No, no, it was not Percival.

I felt relieved when I had so decided, and tried to look at

Digitized by Google

the matter more quietly, but all my fears came back at the sound of Frances' voice outside my door.

"Cynthia, I'm going out—I want to speak to you. Make haste, child! Why on earth do you lock your door?"

Muttering something about a headache I threw the pocket-book under the bed, and trembling, turned the key.

Frances glanced at me sharply, taking note of my white face and scared appearance generally.

"I'm going house-hunting with Sir John," she said; "tell Fluffy I shan't be back in time to see him to-day, so he'd better come in early to-morrow."

"Yes," I answered, with a catch in my throat. Then, as I met her look, half-questioning, half scornful, I felt the hot blood rush into my cheeks and the tears filled my eyes.

"Frankie!" I cried in desperation, "I want to speak to you. I—I——" here I broke down and sobbed, leaning my head against the door-post.

"You're hysterical," said Frances calmly. "Go and lie down, and I'll send Ella to you with a cup of tea, or perhaps some brandy would be better. I'm sorry I can't stay, but I'm late already, and Sir John will be impatient. Try and compose yourself, there's a good child," and with a pat on my shoulder, Frances departed, leaving me to cry in peace.

Her indifference hurt me cruelly, and yet I was conscious of a sense of relief that she had not given me an opportunity of telling her about the pocket-book. I did not fear her judgment for myself, but I dreaded that she might form the same suspicion that for an instant had glanced through my mind.

At any rate I had a few hours respite; Frances would not be back till late.

Fluffy found me sitting disconsolate by the window; I felt wretched and looked worse. I expected him to go when he heard that Frances was out, but the aggravating man elected to remain for tea.

"You're looking ill, Miss Cynthia," he said, staring hard, "what is the matter?"

Fluffy spoke kindly. For the first time I noticed that he had a pleasant voice. For the first time also it struck me that there was more in his face than I had thought. His eyes, when by chance he opened them wide enough for you to see, were unexpectedly humorous; he had a firm chin, and his mouth was well shaped. Stout of figure and not tall, he was never awkward, and at times bore himself with a touch of dignity.

And yet he answered to the name of "Fluffy!"

"Something's troubling you," he said, bringing his chair close to mine. "What is it?"

I was so miserable that I felt drawn towards him. True, Frances had forbidden me to discuss her affairs with anyone, but then Hiram Pettigrew's pocket-book scarcely could be called *her* affair.

"You have known my cousin a long time, Mr. Thomson?"

Fluffy gave a little start. I suppose "Thomson" sounded unfamiliar.

"Yes," he said slowly—"a long time. I knew the late Mr. Norton very well. We were intimate friends. Since her husband's death, I have had the privilege of advising Mrs. Norton on various matters. I am sure"—he leant forward and smiled encouragingly—"your cousin would be quite pleased for me to advise you also, should you require advice."

"I? Oh, Mr. Thomson, I am *so* unhappy, I don't know what to do."

"Tell me what is worrying you. That is the first step."

"But, but—you won't tell Frances, will you?" I cried, hysterically. "There's nothing wrong, indeed, but she might suspect, she might——"

Fluffy laid his hand on my arm.

"Hush!" he said quietly, "we won't discuss your cousin. Let me hear what has happened to upset you."

His words calmed, and also silenced me.

"Well," he said patiently, after a long wait. "Well?"

In desperation I replied. "Look!" I said, springing to my feet. "Look! I found this in my box an hour ago. *This!*" and I held out the pocket-book.

He did not take it, but stared from me to the book and back again at me.

"*In your box!*" he repeated, half whispering; "how did it get in your box?"

"Someone put it there," I cried, "to make people think I was the thief!"

He turned away with a quick indrawn breath. Twice he walked the length of the room, and then he spoke.

"And who," he said, "put it there?"

He stood before me, his head thrown back, with a new look upon his face—Fluffy's face—a look half indignation and half pity. The pity I felt, somehow, was for me, the indignation—

"Who?" he asked again, and stooped towards me. His eyes grown suddenly hard and bright, flashed into mine. They seemed to drag my secret from me, to read the horrible suspicion that would not be silenced.

"No, no!" I screamed, "it is not Percival—not Percival!"

He drew a long breath and was silent. I sat crouching in a chair hiding my face. After some minutes I found courage to speak.

"You won't say anything," I whispered. "I mean you don't think——"

Fluffy came quite close to me. He looked surprised, and yet I thought pleased.

"I think, my dear Miss Cynthia," he said, "that you have acted with marvellous discretion. You have not mentioned this," he rapped the pocket-book, "to anyone but me?"

"No one but you." I looked the question that I dare not ask.

"I hardly think it would be right just now to worry Mrs. Norton with the matter," he replied. "She has a great deal of business to get through, and, as you know, she is not very strong. Nobody else is, of course, concerned to hear. I shall take upon myself to inform Mr. Pettigrew of your discovery, and," he smiled, "I think we may be content to let the matter rest in his hands. He will do what is best for all parties. Meantime——" he insinuated the book towards me.

"Will you not send it to Mr. Pettigrew?" I asked; "or, at any rate, take charge of it for the present. It would be a nightmare to me to have the thing for an hour."

"Certainly, if you wish," he answered.

"And——" I glanced up wistfully, striving to read his face.

"Don't worry," he said, kindly, "about anything or anybody. You can leave it all to Pettigrew. Only take my advice, and don't speak of it—to anyone."

"Thank you so much, so very much, Mr. Thompson; you have been awfully good to me."

"Not a bit," he answered. "I'm only glad to have been of use. Always come to me if you're worried, won't you?" He smiled pleasantly, gripped my hand, and departed, leaving me much comforted by the interview.

If only I had not let slip the name of Percival to him I should have felt comparatively happy.

It seemed as if I were to play the part of hostess all the afternoon. No sooner had Fluffy gone than Lord Kinross was announced, carrying a bunch of pale yellow roses.

"All by yourself?" he said cheerily, "and looking very tired. It's a bad sign when we grow weary of ourselves, Miss

Digitized by Google

Hamilton. What has happened to your cousin?" and he looked quickly round the room.

"She's gone house-hunting with Sir John, and won't be back till late."

He laughed, glanced quickly from me to the flowers he was carrying, then dropped them into my lap.

"Gather ye roses while ye may—take them, Cynthia, if they're pretty enough."

"Did you bring them for me?" I asked suspiciously.

"Can you doubt it?" he murmured impressively. I did all the same, but the roses were lovely, and Lord Kinross almost as nice; so I put the flowers in water and gave his lordship tea.

"Heard anything of old Pettigrew and his pocket-book?" asked Kinross.

I felt myself turn crimson.

"Pettigrew's not long left England," I answered. "Frankie's expecting a letter as soon as he lands."

"What of the notes, anyhow?"

"His secretary in making inquiries, I believe. Lord Kinross, do you know Percival Hope?"

His lordship looked surprised.

"I do," he said, laconically.

"Do you like him?"

"No," he answered smiling, "I don't. But why these conundrums, Cynthia? Do you suspect Percival the Perfect of nicking the old man's notes?"

"Oh! Lord Kinross, How wicked you are!" I cried indignantly.

"Oh, Cynthia! How cross you look!" he answered. "I assure you I don't mean anything against Percival Hope. I don't like him, but I can bear testimony to his moral worth—that's the way to put it, 'moral worth';—it's a delightful phrase. Sounds like Percival himself. No, I'm not going to tell you anything else, how we met and why we parted. It's no good, Cynthia, I'm not to be pumped." He leant back and laughed until I felt that I could have boxed his ears with joy.

Lord Kinross had stayed an hour at least, and seemed inclined to lengthen out his call indefinitely when Frances unexpectedly returned. Lord Kinross was sitting on the hearthrug, "telling my fortune." He declared that he was an expert palmist, and that mine was a most interesting hand. Frankie did not seem quite pleased at his occupation, and I took an early opportunity of escaping from the room.

I learnt from Frankie later that she had secured a house in Pont Street. Mrs. Ponsonby, Sir John's sister, had agreed to let my cousin her family residence for the season—unfurnished.

"We shall move in pretty soon, Cynthia, directly the place is a bit ship-shape. It will have to be refurnished from garret to basement. Mrs. Ponsonby will warehouse her goods and chattels, and I shall have a free hand."

Frankie was very busy the next week choosing wall-papers, selecting carpets and curtains, thinking out colour schemes or designing her drawing-room furniture. Sir John was her faithful companion and adviser in these matters, and proved indefatigable.

Kinross rather resented Strickland's monopoly of my cousin, and turned up one afternoon with the suggestion that we should go to the Spring Meeting at Epsom next day.

"We'll go down on my motor-car," he said. "You haven't seen it yet, Mrs. Norton?"

"To tell the truth, I'm rather afraid of motor-cars, their chief characteristics seem to be a great noise and a horrid smell. I don't like either."

"Ah, that may be so with other people's motors, mine's quite different. As fast as a bird and as light. Say you'll come, Frankie, I'll help you make a book on the races if you consent?"

Frankie did not need much more pressing. She gave way to his lordship's pleading, and next morning found us both in Kinross's motor-car, flying along the road at a terrific speed.

My cousin wore a racing coat of biscuit-coloured cloth, with handsome silver buttons inlaid with gold and lined with a pale shade of rose silk. She looked very charming, and attracted notice from the men and criticism from the women.

It was a bright day and quite warm in the sunshine; there were a lot of people at the races, and the gay dresses of the women, the bright colours of the jockeys, above all the string of horses, high-bred, delicate-looking creatures, made a vivid picture of the course.

Most of the women seemed indifferent about the horses, they were so keen on their bets and their "books" they had no eyes for the pretty creatures. Frankie, on Kinross's advice, backed a favourite for a pony, and I, in a humbler fashion, followed her example, and won a dozen pairs of gloves! We had a champagne lunch, and enjoyed ourselves prodigiously. Kinross met a lot of men he knew, most of whom he introduced to Frankie. As the afternoon wore on she was surrounded by a small crowd of good-looking fellows, laughing joking, and complimenting her. Kinross, in the best of spirits, had gone to speak to a woman who had signalled to him from her carriage close by. She was a middle-aged matron of acid aspect, with lean features, by name Lady Westall.

"Where have *you* come from?" she asked Kinross in a high pitched voice. "Been talking to the Norton woman, I suppose. Can't understand what you men see in her. That reminds me," milady bent forward and spoke eagerly and in low tones. Gradually her excitement got the better of her caution, she was inveighing against somebody—presumably a woman—and in unmeasured terms. I caught a word or two here and there "gambles—other people's money—bad lot—have nothing to do with her." I felt sorry for the "bad lot," whoever she might be. Lady Westall's tongue seemed all too bitter. Kinross listened impatiently at first, but gradually grew interested, and questioned milady eagerly. He was with her some half hour.

Lord Kinross did not seem inclined to talk going home.

He was very quiet, almost dull, and refused Frankie's invitation to stay to dinner. We did not see him again before we left the "Cecil," he called once but we were out.

Frankie took his defection very quietly, and was more charming than ever to Sir John. She devoted herself to him, in fact, and even contrived to shake off Fluffy to a great extent.

Sir John did not like poor Fluffy, and was terribly stiff to him.

Percival Hope called before we left the Cecil. Frances as usual was out, and he waited but a short time. He was rather stiff, but looked very handsome, and I felt horribly ashamed that I could ever have suspected him. He had heard from Pettigrew, who inquired particularly after me. I was longing to ask if Hiram had mentioned anything about the pocket-book, but remembering Fluffy's advice, kept silent.

"You'll come and see my cousin at Pont Street?" I asked him.

"Thanks, I shall be sure to do so. And you—" he paused. "Are you staying long with Mrs. Norton, Miss Hamilton?"

"I hope so. I have no home, nor any relative except my cousin."

His face softened.

You can begin our powerful serial, "Out of Great Tribulation," to-day.

Digitized by Google

"Poor child," he murmured. Then stopped, as though he wanted to say something else.

"You like the life?" he asked abruptly.

"Surely."

"I should have thought an engagement as governess to young children a——"

I interrupted him indignantly. "Thank you, the prospect does not allure me. Why should I prefer a dull, drab existence as an over-worked, under-paid, teacher to living with my cousin?"

"Because," he stopped abruptly. "Forgive me," he said. "I have no right to interfere."

But I felt ruffled, and determined as Frankie would have said, "to get my own back."

"Lord Kinross was talking about you the other day," I said mendaciously.

"Whatever Lord Kinross says is sure to be interesting," Percival returned.

"Do you like him?"

"At times."

"Why not say you detest him outright?"

"I have a preference for speaking the truth," was the answer.

"Always?" I glanced at him, the tail of the old suspicion peeping from my eye.

"Invariably. That is my excuse for saying something that you will not like. I want you to think over my suggestion of taking a position of governess in a nice family. Seriously, I think it would be better for you. Your life here is too exciting to be healthful. Amusement palls after a time."

"Whereas teaching and training is a joy for ever? Thanks for your interest, Mr. Hope, but I'm not so frivolous as you imagine."

"Don't misunderstand me, Miss Hamilton. I do not think you frivolous, I am only afraid that the joy of life you so happily possess may become tarnished. And"—he paused—"yours is too fair a life to be overshadowed," he said, "but it seems I can do nothing."

"Indeed, Frances is quite kind to me," I protested. "She is not often cross."

"I am glad." Then, moved by impulse, he took my hands in his. "Who would not be kind to you?" he murmured, and raised it to his lips.

I felt inclined to cry when he had gone. Why should he be so anxious for me to leave Frances? The old doubt crept into my heart; I could not help remembering that if I went away the risk of discovery so far as I was concerned, would be removed.

For the moment I regretted having made a confidant of Fluffy. It would have been better to have gone straight to Percival. And yet how could I have passed over my cousin in favour of a stranger? Should I write and tell him now of my discovery? Impossible. He would know I had at first suspected him. Whichever way I looked it seemed a hopeless tangle; a tangle that only Pettigrew could straighten.

We moved into Pont Street the end of February; Parliament had opened and the season was about to commence. Our house was at the Piccadilly end, close to the Park.

It was a bright afternoon when we arrived and our new home looked very charming in the sunshine. The window boxes of blue tiles were gay with yellow daffodils, filmy curtains softened the light within the rooms, and the blinds were a creamy satin.

The wide hall, furnished with quaint oak settles, was softly lit, and a faint scent of rose leaves came from huge satsuma jars.

There were three reception, and a dining room on the ground floor. The latter was furnished in green oak, chairs, sideboard and settee, and the carpet was a delicate shade of the same colour. The window curtains were a Gobelin blue. On the mantelpiece, curiously carved, were silver flagons; a big blue bowl full of mimosa stood on the sideboard. There were pictures on the wall, reproductions of Rossetti, and a signed sketch of Whistler's.

Sir John spent the first evening with us, and seemed very happy. His eyes never quitted Frances for a second, and his smile when she spoke to him was good to see. Frances herself was very sweet that evening, not only to the baronet but to me. Altogether we had a most enjoyable time, and I felt sorry when Sir John took his departure about ten.

A few minutes after Sir John left, a telegram arrived for Frankie. She tore open the envelope, read the wire, and, with an impatient movement, threw it on the table.

The light fell upon the paper. There was no signature and no address. Only these words: "He suspects. Make haste."

Whom did it mean? Was it possible the wire referred to Sir John? But, then, what had he to suspect, and why was Frankie to make haste?

"Any answer, ma'am?" asked the maid.

"Yes." Frankie hastily scribbled a few words on a piece of paper, and handed it to me.

"I shall be in all day to-morrow. Come and see me," said the message—to Sir John, I thought. I looked again and found it was addressed to Kinross!

[Next Tuesday's instalment tells how Mrs. Norton received a proposal of marriage.]

"Nothing but two strong hands to work for you, two arms to shelter you, a heart to love you always." *(The above incident comes into next week's instalment of "The Confessions of Cynthia.")*

The Storming of the Fortress.

A Charming Little Narrative of a Girl's Two Conquests.

THERE are few people who can look unmoved at a bride on her wedding day. But Judge Richard Hazleton stood grimly by while his favourite grandson, Richard, was married to the girl of his choice, and nobody detected the least softening of his keen black eyes, or the slightest relaxation of the stern lines round his close-set mouth.

When congratulations became necessary, he marched slowly up to the young pair, standing flushed and smiling among the flowers, bowed stiffly to the new Mrs. Richard Hazleton, and looking coldly over her fair head, shook his grandson's hand without a word, and turned away, a proud, unrelenting figure. Then he vanished from the house, and nobody saw him again that day.

Richard Hazleton, his smooth cheek glowing an indignant red, looked down at his bride with a tender light in his eyes.

"Never mind, dear," he whispered; "you'll win him yet."

She smiled back, with the least suspicion of wet lashes to intensify the beauty of her violet eyes. The look said, "I will," and Richard believed it, and stood straight again, with a lift of the head singularly like that of Judge Hazleton himself.

For it mattered much what Grandfather Hazleton thought of Richard's marriage. The boy had lost both father and mother at an early age, and he and his brother Archer had been brought up by their paternal grandfather. Archer had finished his college course and gone away to the other side of the world several years before Richard had come to maturity. The younger brother had been Judge Hazleton's dearest treasure, whom he loved with a love as deep as it was reticent.

When, at twenty-six, Richard, on a successful footing of his own in the world, had announced to his grandfather his intention to marry the fair-haired girl with the eyes like blue violets, who had grown up in the big house next door, and whose father was Judge Hazleton's especial aversion, the old gentleman had been excessively displeased.

But he had not been able to advance a reason for his displeasure, beyond the insufficient one of his dislike to his neighbour and political rival, so the marriage had proceeded. For Richard, while loyal to his grandfather, was also loyal to the violet eyes, and knew no just cause why any should forbid the banns.

Judge Hazleton himself did not forbid them, but he did all that he felt called upon to do in the matter when he went to the house of General Andrews during the brief period of the marriage ceremony.

"Grandfather," said Richard, coming in one morning when he and Evelyn had returned from their wedding trip and had taken up a temporary abode next door, "we've decided on a house—if we can get it. Will you sell us one of yours?"

His tone was precisely as if nothing unusual had happened. The judge eyed him severely over his gold-rimmed spectacles.

"Which one? The Singleton place, I suppose."

"No, sir. Aunt Martha's old house in Albemarle Street."

The judge took off his glasses and wiped them. "May I inquire why you have selected that?"

"It is within my means—I hope," exclaimed Richard promptly. "The Singleton place is not. We don't care to start off with a pretence of style beyond our income. Besides, Evelyn prefers the old house."

Judge Hazleton grunted—it could be called nothing else. Then he replaced his spectacles, took up his pen, and went on with the writing Richard had interrupted. The young man waited silently, but with a peculiar curve at the corners of his mouth. He had not lived for twenty years with his grandparent without learning that there is a time for the withholding of speech.

The old gentleman finished his page, blotted it, and said, without looking up:

"I will let the house to you. I do not wish to sell it. It would not be worth your while to buy it. Your bird will demand a cage with more gilding before very long. She's too young to know her own mind yet."

His grandson's eyes sparkled with a quick retort which he did not allow to reach his lips. He rose with a quiet, "Very well, sir; thank you," and left the room.

Outside in the street he rejoined his young wife with a smothered cry of delight. "We can hire it!" he told her gleefully. "I did not dare expect as much as that."

"I hoped he would be pleased that we wanted it," she said, with a shadow of disappointment in her eyes.

"Don't you flatter yourself he'd show it. Not he. That'll come later, when we've carried out your little schemes. That is—I hope it will. It will take a long storming of the citadel and a tremendous battering of the fortifications to carry off the enemy into our country. But we'll do it. He shall own some day that my wife——"

He finished the sentence with a look more eloquent than the words he could not find. Then the two walked over to Albemarle Street, to go by the quaint little house with the green blinds, where Evelyn had chosen to live chiefly that she might win Grandfather Hazleton's heart into her keeping.

Putting the place in order took two months. All Richard's spare time was given to the ransacking of the shops, and of certain other places, with Evelyn, for suitable furnishing for the new home. This differed greatly from the ordinary shopping of the newly wedded, the fashion whereof shall be told later.

On a bleak day in December the two, having begun housekeeping, separated at the door of the house in Albemarle Street with a somewhat singular conversation. Evelyn was anxiously scanning the heavens, especially in the north-east.

"Don't you think there's going to be a storm, Richard?" she asked. "The papers say so."

"There surely will, dear. Look at that blackness in the east now."

"Oh, I hope so! If it will only be a real 'nor'easter,' one that will last a day or two—with his rheumatism! But, Richard, it may begin before you get him here. Do hurry!"

Richard ran down the steps laughing, and waved his hat back at her from the bottom.

Read "Love or Duty," our Coronation story.

Digitized by Google

"Here's to our desperate schemes, little plotter!" he cried softly. "May a great storm come up and blow into Grandfather Hazleton a fervent appreciation of the blink of our ain fireside. I'll bring him back with me, Evelyn, if it can be done. Meanwhile, don't let the duck burn up!"

He hurried away; and presently Judge Hazleton, sitting gloomily in his library, nursing a left leg which already felt the oncoming storm, heard himself addressed by the familiar cheery voice. He had missed that voice, and felt an ache which he would not own, but which hurt none the less for that.

"Many happy returns, grandfather!" cried Richard, and Richard's handsome face beamed at him from the doorway.

"Come in," said the judge. He said it without much relaxation of countenance, to be sure, but with a milder inflection than he had employed toward his grandson of late.

The young man came in gaily, bringing an atmosphere of fresh air and youth and health with him, as he had ever done. He sat down on the arm of a big chair, opposite his grandfather. He had not removed his overcoat; his hat was in his hand.

"It's a cold day," he said, "but the air is fine, and a breath of it would do you good. Let me order the horses, will you, sir, and come over to Albemarle Street with me? There's a little birthday dinner waiting for you there, and our fireside needs your christening. There's a magnificent old fireplace in Aunt Martha's house—remember it, sir?—and the jolliest fire is roaring up the chimney this minute. Please, grandfather!"

The old man hesitated. Rejection was in his eye, refusal on his lips, but it was a little difficult to meet with his customary curt "no" an invitation like this, bubbling over with goodwill and heartiness. Meanwhile Richard came lightly across the floor and dropped upon one knee before Judge Richard Hazleton. He laid one warm hand on the judge's cold one, looked up, laughing, and sued for the favour.

"Please, sir!" he said. "It's your birthday. You never denied me a favour on your birthday, grandfather."

The judge stirred uneasily, moistened his lips, got slowly and stiffly to his feet, and reached for the bell.

"Well, well, boy," he said, gruffly, "this once! But not again, mind you."

Now Grandfather Hazleton had not addressed one word to Richard's wife since the wedding day—and you will remember that he had not addressed her then. So it might easily have been an embarrassing moment all round when the Hazleton coachman drew up before Aunt Martha's old house in Albemarle Street, and Evelyn appeared at the top of the steps to greet the two coming up them by painful stages.

The black clouds in the north-east were gathering thickly, and the judge's rheumatism was growing very bad indeed. But Richard looked up confidently, with a cheerful "Here we are!" and the blithest voice in the world responded, "I'm so glad! Come in out of this wretched cold to our splendid fire!" And somehow there was no greeting necessary.

Judge Hazleton did not offer to shake hands with young Mrs. Richard, but nobody appeared to notice that, and the two had him out of his overcoat and into a big easy chair in front of the fire before he had time to object or to know what he was about.

They did not try to make him talk. Richard was all about the room, saying gay things first from this corner, then from that. Evelyn flitted in and out, half covered by a big white apron with a most fetching ruffled bib.

Savoury odours floated in each time she opened the dining-room door, and the judge's nostrils detected the delicious fragrance of—was it roast duck? There was a suspicion of spiciness in the air, too, which might or might not be that of mince pies. The judge especially liked mince pies.

There were a few moments when Evelyn called Richard out to assist her with something. Then the judge sat up straight in his chair, turned and glanced sharply about the room.

His first impression, then, had been correct. Instead of being furnished in the latest modern style, the long, low-ceiled apartment was a veritable reproduction of the best of old-time living rooms.

A quaint flowered paper covered the walls; fine pieces of old mahogany stood here and there; a slender-legged table that he could have sworn belonged to his mother was at his elbow. Bits of old china caught his eye upon the chimney-piece; over it hung—yes, actually—a long discarded but undeniably fine portrait of the judge himself in his youthful days.

He heard them coming laughing back, and sank into his chair again, his lips setting tightly. His eyes fixed themselves on the fire, and Richard had to say twice, "Grandfather, our little dinner is served. Will you come out, sir?" before the guest pulled himself together and, with the necessary aid of his grandson's arm, limped slowly out.

Such a dinner! And such a table—for that was what first demanded the grudging attention of his guest.

Surely he recognised those thin, white plates and cups and saucers, with the delicate green sprigs. Absently his finger touched one on the sprigs of his plate. As a boy at his mother's table he had always been impelled to feel them to see if they would push off. They would not push off any more readily now than they would then. He drew away his finger, and his eyes travelled to the walls of the room, and he started slightly in his chair.

"Do you recognise grandmother's old sideboard?" asked Richard, slicing off thin morsels of rich and tender duck with quite a skilful hand for one so new at carving—and everybody knows that ducks are hard carving, too. "And this is her dinner-set. Aunt Patience let us have all these things when she found that we really cared—that Evelyn cared. We do care, sir; and Evelyn more than I. It's all her idea. I suppose I should naturally have started in with a new house and new furniture—varnish not dry, you know—patent oak rockers, and green marble centre-tables, and cheap etchings on the walls——"

"Richard!" How pretty her face was, flushed and laughing in protest, in the soft light from the candles! Richard gave her an answering glance, full of fun and mischief—but with his heart in it, none the less.

"He loves the dear old things just as well as I do!" Evelyn declared, pouring coffee and putting in a generous supply of rich cream.

Then she held the old-fashioned sugar-tongs poised above the green and white sugar-bowl. She looked up full into Judge Hazleton's face with a daring pair of violet eyes.

"How many lumps, grandfather?" she asked, and flushed a rosier red than ever. But her glance did not flinch.

In the short pause that followed, Richard dare not look up; he kept his eyes fixed on the centrepiece. But he listened, with his heart in his mouth. Question and answer had not yet passed between the two.

"Two," said Judge Hazleton, and his black eyes went for an instant deep into the violet ones, with a searching power which made his grandson feel as if he would like to jump between.

But Evelyn met him with a frank smile, dropped in the two lumps and gave him the cup. Richard drew a long breath.

The dinner was superb. Where it came from or who cooked it Judge Hazleton did not know, but it suited his critical taste. It ended with an old-fashioned plum pudding. Comment the guest made none, but he swallowed his share of the pudding to the last crumb.

Richard smiled to himself as he noted the fact.

"Jove, but the wind blows!" said the young host, as they came back to the fire in the front room. "Hear the windows rattle!"

He raised the curtain and looked out. "It's storming furiously!" he cried. "And by all that's great, grandfather, I believe I didn't tell Michael to come for you!"

"Telephone," said the judge.

"Why, we haven't had one put in yet. Too bad! Of course I can go out and send word from somewhere. But—suppose you don't go out, grandfather? You know such a storm is pretty hard on your rheumatism."

"I must go home to-night!" said the judge, as sternly as if much depended on his return.

He got up and made his way to the front door and opened it. A tremendous blast threw the heavy oak back upon him, knocked his spectacles from his nose, and cut him through with its penetrating chill.

He drew back, his heavy white hair erect and dancing in a most undignified way, and Richard, putting his weight against the door, closed it. Evelyn picked up the spectacles. The judge limped back without a word. The two behind him glanced at one another triumphantly.

"Sing for us, dear," proposed Richard. "Perhaps the worst of the storm will be over presently."

The girl went over to the piano; it was the only modern thing in the room. She played softly, and sang in a clear young contralto voice which had in it a quality of the sort which touches heart-strings. She sang modern songs at first, Grieg and Nevin and Chaminade. But presently she gave them "Annie Laurie."

Then the judge got suddenly up.

"If I must stay," he said, abruptly, "I think I will go to bed."

Evelyn lit a candle, and Richard offered his arm again up the short staircase. The judge climbed slowly, breathing somewhat heavily. Richard led him to the front room and stopped with his hand on the latch.

"We furnished this room, sir," he said, in his clear voice, which nevertheless shook a little, "just for you. We hoped you might like to stay here with us sometimes, and feel that it was home. Aunt Patience sent for most of the things. They came from the old place down in Surrey, and she says they are the ones you and grandmother had when you kept house—when father was a boy. We hope you'll like it, sir. You don't know how much we want to please you, grandfather—Evelyn and I."

He opened the door, and the judge walked in—much as if he would have preferred to stay outside. A small fire crackling cheerily in the odd little fireplace threw its wavering light on the quaint blue and white "landscape" paper which covered the walls.

A four-poster bed, hung with dimity, was there, a shining high mahogany chest of drawers, a little washstand with a blue and white pitcher and bowl. High-backed chairs stood about, with one cosily cushioned big rocker in front of the fire; on the floor lay the prettiest of old Turkey carpets.

Grandfather Hazleton looked about with dazed eyes. They all stood silent for a moment; then a gentle hand fell on his arm, and he stared down for the second time that evening into a well-nigh irresistible pair of eyes.

"It's been such a happiness to get it ready for you!" said the voice to which Richard had long sworn allegiance. "Won't you forgive us for loving each other, and for not being content without your approval and your love?"

It was a long moment, and again his grandson held his breath, feeling that if the elder man spurned the girl now, he, Richard, must henceforth refuse to be to him that which he had been all his life.

But there is a temperature at which the hardest substances melt, and perhaps it was not Judge Hazleton's heart which was at fault, after all, only his pride; and pride cannot endure before love. Suddenly he turned and laid both hands upon Evelyn's shoulders, bent and kissed her gently on the forehead. Then he went over to the fire and sat down.

Richard, with a radiant face, let Evelyn draw him quietly away out into the hall, and noiselessly closed the door. Then he triumphed openly.

"You've done it, little girl, you've done it, bless you!" he whispered.

Then they went silent and joyfully downstairs. But they did not know that in the little bedroom which looked like the home of his youth an old man sat and wiped away the tears—tears which meant things the younger people, with all their love and goodwill, could never understand.

G. S. Richmond.

Might be Awkward.

She: "That's prejudice. Why wouldn't you marry a shop-girl?" He: "Oh, she'd always be calling for cash, you know."

Ought to Have.

First Friend: "Do you have good police protection out your way?" Second Friend: "Do we? Well, I should say so. We have the prettiest servant girl in the town."

After Marriage.

Young Wife (complainingly): "You haven't brought me a box of chocolates since we were married." Young Husband: "That's queer. Come to think of it, you haven't remarked that you *so* enjoyed the smoke of a good cigar since we were married."

Another Bargain.

"Dalton said he felt awfully cheap last night when Miss Savecash accepted him." Morton: "Why?" "Because she never takes anything unless it's a bargain."

Sensation in Court.

"Young man," said the judge sternly, "your face is familiar. Have you ever been in this court before?" "No, sir," replied the young man, "I'm a billiard marker."

A Mild Form.

Madge: "I love Cholly even for his weaknesses." May: "But has he many?" Madge: "One, very pronounced. Kleptomania." May: "Stealing? Oh, how terrible!" "Yes, but they're only—er—kisses."

Digitized by Google

WHOLESALE ECONOMY.

Or, How Love's Labour was Lost.

THEY had not gone on a honeymoon, she and her dear hubby; they had determined to stop at home and economise. Her father had given her a cheque for fifty pounds, and Uncle Openpurse one for a hundred.

When hubby had gone away to business after breakfast, she rushed upstairs and put on her bonnet, while her fingers trembled with suppressed excitement and a scarlet flush intermittently suffused her damask cheeks. Looking into her purse for the three-hundred-and-forty-fifth time, to see if the notes were all right, she tripped down the stairs and sought the butcher's shop.

"I want some beef," she smiled.

"I have an excellent cut here, madam; sweet as a nut; it weighs about three pounds."

A brilliant flash of scorn came out of her eye, and struck the portly butcher.

"What is your lowest wholesale price for an ox?"

He quoted twice the amount he had given, and awaited results.

"Please send two of them round as soon as possible to this address—stop, you can make it three. And now I would like some liver; I *do* so love liver and bacon."

The price, to her mind, being moderate, she paid for twenty pounds of liver, and for ten pounds of pork sausages and a quarter of a ton of ice to keep it all cool.

Then she sailed down the street to the grocer, and asked the sum required for butter.

"The best is eighteenpence a pound, m'lydy; can't be beat anywheres."

Her sweet little nose was lifted high in scorn, and the grocer shivered before a withering glance.

"I shall require four tubs, if you please; also seven Cheddar cheeses, and a barrel of moist sugar. If you will quote your lowest wholesale price for treacle, you may send ten pounds, and I should also like a dozen hams, and a box of eggs. This is the address. Good-morning."

The grocer sank into a tub of margarine as her dainty form melted through the doorway. And as he sat there, in a state of collapse, she returned hurriedly, and added an order for two barrels of flour and fifty bladders of lard.

The fishmonger wiped his hands on his apron, and began flopping about a fine hake, when she started to interview him.

"I want rather large quantities of fish, if you please," while her eyes glistened with a strange and glad light. "What are your bloaters a box, or chest, or barrel, or however you sell them? I want some whitebait too, I *love* whitebait. I also shall require four or five dozen eels, if you can let me have them; my husband loves eels. Also, if you have some crabs and lobsters, you might let me have six dozen of each, only they must be alive."

The tradesman swallowed a shrimp and his wonderment, and made entries in a large book, and when she had given him the address she left for the live poultryman's place of business lower down the street.

Mrs. Dasher had a theory of her own about poultry. She was fond of a nice duck, and still more so of a cut from a goose, while she was a perfect Russian in her hankering after turkey. But she never had swallowed any part of one that had been bought dead, for, you see, she had been brought up on a farm. So, after much scrupulous examination, she decided that three dozen roosters, together with a score of ducks, and thirty-three turkeys (the odd three being thrown in because of the quantity bought), and forty-seven geese would suffice her purpose for the time being.

But, you will say, kind reader, is this economy? Read on. Strange and unfathomable are the ways of woman, especially the woman newly married. Mrs. Dasher was economy itself.

On her way back she met a man with a barrow selling oranges. They were large and ripe-looking and mouth-watering, and she asked the price (just as a matter of form), and paid for the lot, and told the man where to take them.

Outside the building where she and her hubby rented four rooms were arranged some half a dozen carts, the practical and satisfactory result of her morning's hard labour. Her eyes glistened, and a glad smile played about her lips as the sight met her gaze.

As she swept round the corner two men were carrying in the carcase of an ox, followed by three others supporting a block of ice in a blanket, and in their immediate footsteps followed a man struggling with the bloaters.

At length they went, and she, dispatching a messenger for her husband, nimbly scrambled over the purchases, and tried to make things a bit straight in the drawing-room, where most of the goods had been placed, owing to want of supervision, before she had come.

After a time she thought she heard her husband calling, but the fowls were singing so sweetly to the accompaniment of the turkeys, that she could not discriminate.

He came through the window at last, for the doors were blocked with goods. He stepped on some split whitebait, which were slippery, and sat down, shooting his legs into the crate of crabs, and bringing down two blocks of ice on his brawny chest, while seven geese resented his efforts to strangle them, and one eel went down the back of his neck and another up the sleeve of his coat.

After the ice had melted, he was able to get up, and then he made his way to where his wife's voice sounded high above the feathered chorus. She could not come to him because, through some mischance, she lay on a bed of eggs, with a sheet of treacle and a counterpane of calves' liver over her.

Mrs. Dasher began to get unhappy. She whimpered. She grumbled, and tried to explain.

"Oh, I'm so miserable," she said, "I didn't know it was going to be like this. I don't think your plan is good. I wish I had taken ma's advice. Oh, I am so miserable."

Before he married her, Dasher had impressed upon her the fact that, to economise, goods should always be bought in quantities.

"Strive to do a wholesale business as much as possible," he had said. "For you get things much cheaper that way. Yes, strive."

She had striven!

T. L. Pearse.

Digitized by Google

A CASE OF TRUE LOVE.

Telling how a Girl Saved an Invention from being Stolen.

The sun was just dipping into the West, and an eager, jostling stream of humanity hurried towards the slow-moving procession of tram-cars. The factories were sending forth their toilers, and men and women and children all seemed bent on reaching their homes as quickly as possible. They filled the trams, and they crowded the platforms of the railway stations. They pushed and jostled and crowded, but it was all done in good-natured spirit. They were too hurried even to offer excuses. And they were too much in earnest to laugh. It was a case of survival of the strenuous.

But there was one girl, pale and slender, who fell behind in this wild rush, and looked quite helplessly at the fast filling cars. She had caught hold of an ornamental lamp-post, and stood waiting for the first rush to be over.

As she lingered there, gazing out across the noisy street, a young man came up a side street whistling merrily. He was walking briskly, but as he neared the kerb he stopped short and stared up the street. He was looking for his car. Then his gaze, quite by chance, fell on the girl. He looked at her sharply and hesitated. Then he stepped towards her, and lifted his hat.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but can I be of any assistance?"

The girl turned and looked at him. He was a bright-faced young fellow, and his smile was pleasant to see.

"Thank you," said the girl, "but I think I can manage to get the car."

A little spasm of distress crossed her face, and the young man instantly came nearer.

"I'm afraid you are ill," he said.

"No," she replied, and called up a ghost of a smile. "I sprained my ankle several weeks ago and I'm afraid I turned it again a little as I hurried round the corner. Besides, I don't like the crowded cars. I always wait until the first rush is over. Please don't bother yourself about me. You will miss your car."

"All cars look alike to me," said the young man. "There's nobody to wait my coming. If you don't mind I'll stand by you. What car do you take?"

"The green one," replied the girl. "But really, I wish you wouldn't wait."

"I take the same car," laughed the youth. "That's almost as good as an introduction. Besides, I think we are fellow workmen in the same factory. I'm sure I've seen you coming out of the office."

"I'm in the correspondence department," said the girl.

"And I have charge of the machinery," said the young man. "My name is Arthur Winfield."

The girl hesitated.

"My name is Hester Crane," she said, and blushed a little as the bright-eyed young man lifted his hat.

"There's our car," he cried, "and it isn't a bit crowded. Come on."

As she let go the post he offered his arm. She leant upon it and was very glad of the help it gave, for her ankle was quite stiff. He helped her on and took a seat, and sat beside her.

"There," he said, in his cheery way. "I think we were both wise to wait. This is very much better than being crushed. How far do you go?"

"To Vernon Street," she answered.

"And I go to Maynard Street, two turnings beyond. We are almost neighbours. Will there be somebody waiting for you?"

"My mother," said the girl.

"You're lucky," said the young man. "I've only got a landlady to watch for me. And when she gets tired of watching she clears the table and gives me up as a bad job. I expect she thinks I deserve all the pangs of unrequited hunger."

"I'm afraid she'll think you are not coming to-night," said the girl in a tone of regret.

"Pooh, what of that?" cried the youth. "I'm an inventor, and inventors have to eat sparingly to keep their wits sharpened. Everybody knows that."

The conductor was coming along and Arthur let the girl pay her fare—a privilege that she eagerly embraced.

"Ankle better?" he asked.

"Yes, I am quite sure it is."

"Good. How far do you live from the car line?"

"At the corner of the next street."

"That's quite a walk."

"It isn't very far," said the girl quickly.

The young man smiled and easily turned the subject of conversation to the factory, and that was common ground that interested both. Her work was not hard, she told him, but very monotonous. She had hoped to be a school teacher, and had fitted herself for it, but the school didn't come and she really had to work. The pay was small, but it was sure and she needed it. Perhaps she would be forewoman some day. At present that was the height and end of her ambition.

And Arthur told her something about himself. He was a trained mechanic with a technical education, and he had come to the city to accept a salary that tempted him from a big manufacturing town further north. It was a very good salary, he told her, and the work was not hard, although it entailed a great deal of responsibility. But he had been fortunate. Comparatively few accidents had bothered him, and he fancied the improvements he introduced had put the mechanical outfit on a plane that compared well with anything of the kind in the country. But although the salary was good, he laughingly added, he saved very little of it.

"I have an invention under way that eats up my money almost as fast as I can earn it," he said. "And it eats up all my spare time too. There never was anything like it. It's worse than a spoilt child. I have to pamper it at every turn. But of course it's going to make my fortune. I am as sure of that as I am of breathing."

His eyes sparkled and his confident smile was pleasant to see.

"I hope you are right," said Hester.

"I'm as right as can be," he said, "if they don't steal it from me."

"Steal it from you?" repeated Hester.

"Yes," replied the young man. "That's a thought that continually worries me. You see, the agents of another machine, the one in general use, know I am at work along the same lines, and they greatly fear I have made an important improvement. They are quite right. Naturally they are desperately anxious to find out what my discovery is and forestall me. And I don't think they will have any scruples about the means they employ. In fact, I take my model to pieces every night and hide some parts, and in the morning carry away others. I know they have tried to bribe the servant where I lodge to let them enter my room, and I have to be constantly on the look-out for them."

"That seems a great outrage," said the girl. "It's trying to steal the product of your brain."

"Oh, they'd steal anything that would reveal the secret."

laughed Arthur. "I've no doubt they'd kidnap me if they thought they could gain the information that way. But here is your street."

He helped the girl to alight, and despite her protests, walked with her to her home. He paused at the gate.

"Please help me up the steps," said Hester. She clung to his arm as she rapped at the door of the neat little villa. Almost instantly an elderly lady appeared in the doorway.

"Mother," said Hester Crane, "this is Mr. Arthur Winfield, who has lost his dinner on my account. He will stay to tea."

It was Arthur's turn to protest, but a moment later he found himself in the tidy little parlour, while from the inner apartment came the murmur of the women's voices, and the subdued clatter of plates and table-ware.

It was a plain little meal that he was presently bidden to, but everything was palatable, and there was plenty. Arthur enjoyed it all, and showed his enjoyment both with appetite and conversation.

Hester Crane was not at the factory the next day. Arthur found this out when he watched for her at closing time. So it was quite natural he should call in the evening and inquire after her health.

He was cordially greeted by the mother, and a little later by Hester. She had found, she told him, that her ankle needed a complete rest, and so she could not go to the factory again that week.

Arthur meant to go when he had found out about Hester, but he didn't. He lingered, quite forgetful of his neglected invention, and it was only recalled to him when he stood in the hallway, hat in hand.

"I'm afraid," said Hester, "that unwittingly I have caused you to neglect that precious machine."

"I needed a little rest," said Arthur, "and there is no great hurry."

But when he reached his lodgings he worked on the machine until long past midnight.

Arthur had known the Cranes for a fortnight, or perhaps a little longer, when he called one evening filled with a sudden resolve. Hester greeted him, and then a little later he asked for her mother.

"Mrs. Crane," said Arthur, "I want to know if you will take me for a lodger? You see I want to come for several reasons. My work would be safer here for one thing, and then it is so much more like a home. I'm very selfish about this, I know, and I want to be frank about it. The fact is, it is so pleasant here that it quite lures me away from the other place, and—and, you see, if I really lived here why I could enjoy your society and my work, too. That's very ingenuous, isn't it?"

The mother laughed.

"It's certainly very complimentary," she said.

Then she looked at Hester.

"He might have the large front room," she said.

"It is very bare," said Hester.

"I have plenty of things to put in it," cried Arthur. "All I really want is room for a bed and my work-table."

The mother laughed again.

"We might take you on trial," she said.

"And you will let me fix the rate," said Arthur eagerly. "You see it's not an ordinary case."

"You may pay us just what you are paying now," said the lady. "And no more."

"Very well," said Arthur. "My month is up to-morrow."

So he moved in and proved to be just what he had promised, a model lodger.

His coming brought about one change in the family affairs that was highly apppreciated. Hester left the factory, and almost immediately her health improved, and her colour came back, and in Arthur's eyes she grew more beautiful every day.

And now he put in all his spare moments on the invention. He no longer took it to pieces at night. He felt that it was under watchful eyes during his absence. And then one morning he told them it only needed an hour or two of work to finish it.

"And I am going to telegraph Mr. Bagby, the manufacturer, to come on at once and inspect my working model," he said at the breakfast-table."

That morning Hester had a caller. Her mother had gone to the market and she was alone. The caller was a mild-looking man in sober black, who inquired for Mrs. Crane.

"My mother is not in," she said.

"I am sorry," said the man in black. "I am Mr. Dabney, the new pastor at the Congregational Church. I am out making a few calls and regret very much that I am prevented from meeting your estimable mother. Convey to her, please, my sincere regards. Thank you."

He rose to go, and then suddenly clutched at his side with a little groan, and fell back in the chair.

"You are ill!" cried Hester.

"It is m-my heart," he stammered. "Here, take this prescription to the nearest chemist and hurry back with what it calls for. Oh, this pain!" He thrust a crumpled paper in Hester's hands. "Go!" he gasped, and fell back.

Hester ran into the inner room to get her hat, and a second later a rear door slammed. The caller listened for a moment. Then he hastily rose and went to the stairs. He paused and listened again. Then he nimbly ascended the steps.

They were narrow stairs with a sharp turn. There was a smile on the caller's face as he sprang up them.

Then he suddenly recoiled with an oath.

Hester was standing on the upper landing.

"Well," she said, and her voice was wonderfully steady.

"Stand aside," he snarled. "I'm a desperate man."

"Wait!" cried Hester. "Do you see this bottle? It is ammonia, and uncorked. I thought it would revive you. Come a step nearer and I'll fling it all in your wicked face."

The fellow hesitated, scowling at the resolute eyes above him.

"Go," said Hester.

He slunk back step by step.

"I ought to kill you," he snarled. And then he was gone.

Hester cautiously slipped downstairs and bolted the door.

Then she sank on the lower step and cried.

She told Arthur that evening of this adventure. He turned a little pale and gave her an eloquent look.

The next night the eminent manufacturer came, and Arthur was closeted with him for over an hour. When he had gone the young man called Hester and her mother.

"Congratulate me," he said with outstretched hands.

They did, and most sincerely.

"And the terms are satisfactory?" the elder lady inquired.

"More than satisfactory," laughed Arthur. "He is to give me £20,000 down, and a royalty of £100 on every machine manufactured. We have signed a joint agreement."

"That's fine," cried the lady. "But I'm sure your good fortune will not spoil you. Any way, it mustn't cause you to forget old friends."

"I'm going to forget some people," laughed Arthur, "but not the dear friends to whom I owe so much."

"But you owe us nothing. Why, you even pay in advance."

And she and Arthur laughed at this pleasantry, but Hester looked a little serious.

"I want you to go out and take a walk with me, Hester," said Arthur. It was the first time he had called her that. "I need a little cooling off. Get your pretty hat, please, the one you keep upstairs. This is a special occasion, you know."

As she ascended the stairs Arthur turned to her mother.

"Dear lady," he softly said, "I have another venture to settle to-night, and it means more to me than the first one. I have only waited until the first was a success, and that has given me courage. I am going to ask Hester to be my wife."

There was a light step on the stairs.

Arthur could see the tears glistening in the mother's eyes as she looked up at him, but she smiled brightly and nodded.

And half an hour later, when she opened the door for the returning pair and caught sight of Hester's radiant face, she knew all was well.

W. R. Rose.

Digitized by Google

An Unconscious Confederate.

"WHATEVER makes you look so glum, my dear fellow?" asked Dick Faynes, as his friend turned slowly, half unconsciously, in his chair to see who had thus abruptly entered. "Anything very dreadful happened?"

"Well, I can't say that," answered Alec Buxton with an awkward laugh, rising and shaking his visitor's hand warmly. "I was thinking of—— But come and sit down. I'm glad to see you. What has brought you here?"

"I came to ask if you could make it convenient to spend a week with us down home. Getting up a little party, you know, and you're a good fellow, and a capital player at tennis, and——" Here Dick broke off suddenly, and, becoming more serious, inquired again if anything had happened. "You look so worried and perplexed," he explained. "Something gone wrong since the party a fortnight ago, eh?"

"Everything—er—that is, nothing much!" was the confused reply.

Dick stared at his friend; it was so unlike him. He drew his chair slightly nearer to Alec's and remarked laconically:

"That's nonsense, you know! Better tell me straight out."

"Very well," said Alec, just as laconically. "I'm in love"—Dick stared harder than before—"with your cousin!" Dick jumped from his seat and sat down again in amazement.

"You!" he ejaculated.

"Oh, yes, I am always doing just what nobody ever dreams I shall do!" said Alec savagely. "That's my lot in life—to act wrongly all the time. It seems to have begun with my birth; they wanted a girl, and I was another son. Then they gave me a Scotch name because we are not in the least bit Scotch, I suppose. And everything has been contrary ever since. I was intended for the Church and I take to the Bar; I was——"

Here he was interrupted by a merry laugh from Faynes.

"Don't go over the list, Alec! I am sorry I expressed surprise. But why that should make you glum, I can't understand; people are happy when they are in love. *I* was, when I wrote poetry to Nance Marsh. She married another fellow, but as I was only seventeen, and she was twenty-five, perhaps it was as well! But with you and Nora it's different. It's time to look sad when she refuses you! Never meet troubles half way!"

Alec's face became less gloomy as he listened to his friend's chatter. Dick Faynes was rather a shallow individual, one on whom troubles make little impression, and to whom deep feelings are unknown, but who acted as a gleam of sunshine.

"That's just the trouble, old fellow," said Alec. "I don't think I shall have to wait long for a refusal, supposing I have courage enough to get so far as a proposal. That is just what is worrying me. I am deeply in love with her; it was love at first sight, and I feel that she is the only woman for me."

"I was like that about Nance Marsh. I'm like that with every girl I fall in love with," observed Dick Faynes with such evident sincerity that Buxton, who was at first inclined to resent the idea that he could be "like that" with any other girl than Nora, was ultimately compelled to laugh.

Alec Buxton was just the opposite of Faynes; he was just as earnest and broad-shouldered as Faynes was light-hearted and slim. He couldn't feel angry with his young friend.

"I don't see why you should worry about Nora," continued Dick. "I'm sure she is very fond of you—that is, I mean she will be, or she ought to be, you know! Why don't you ask her if she—er—likes you?"

The logic of the question was apparent to so deep a thinker as Alec. That was what a sensible man would do, but Alec hesitated because he had such a modest opinion of himself.

"I suppose the affair has hardly gone far enough; I don't know that I actually paid her any special attention——"

"Yes, you did!" said Dick with much assurance. "I noticed it; so did others; and I believe *she* did."

"Do you think so?" queried Alec, his face reddening with pleasure and bashfulness. "Oh, but I am not her style. Women like a bold, daring fellow; one who—who——"

"Don't you upset yourself about that!" was Dick's reassuring remark. "You go in and win, old fellow" (encouragingly). "Some girls will marry anyone, so don't be afraid!"

"Thank you! But I scarcely class your cousin among them."

"Oh, bother!" exclaimed Faynes, in a tone of vexation. "I am always saying things wrong or people are always taking what I say in a wrong light. I meant—I meant—— Look here! You make one of our party! Nora will be there, and if you think that she wants you to do some daring deed before she will fall in love with you, there ought to be plenty of chances of that at Hilton Manor. There's a river, where you always stand a chance of being upset if you want to—I mean, if you aren't careful. And tennis, and cycling, and cricket, and all sorts of dangerous things. You must come!"

"I will!" responded Alec, making a sudden resolve. "But," he added quizzingly, "I must try to keep clear of all those deadly amusements you have just mentioned."

Dick laughed. "I dare say I said it all wrong, but I mean well, you know!" Alec was sure of that, although the fact was not to be deduced from his friend's rather incoherent observations. "I'll help you all I can, for I honestly believe that Nora and you would make a good match. I should like to see Nora married," he continued reflectively. "That would give the other girls a chance, you see. All the fellows want her, and if she were not to be had, they would have to turn their attention to the others. Yes, it would be a good move for you to captivate Nora by doing something daring. I'll think of a plan and let you know. So you'll come; that's settled," he rattled on. "Formal invites to be sent the day after to-morrow. Good-bye, now! I must be off!"

On the following day Alec Buxton received a letter from Faynes which at first made him angry, and then amused him.

"What a creature he is!" he muttered, seating himself at his writing table, with Dick's letter in front of him. "I believe I am right in supposing that I am not the kind of man to enslave her affections, and that she wants a bold, dashing fellow, but I'm not going to play such tricks as *that*, Mr. Richard Faynes!"

He took up his pen, wrote a few words on the blank space

You can begin our powerful serial, "Out of Great Tribulation," to-day.

Digitized by Google

under the signature, then placed the letter in an envelope and addressed it to Faynes.

The party at Hilton Manor was a great success; the weather was grand, and the visitors were having one of the pleasantest holidays that any of them could remember or desire. The greater part of the fortnight was past, and as the day of departure grew nearer the young people became the more determined to make the most of the time that remained.

Alec Buxton was, perhaps, the least happy; it would be incorrect to say that he was unhappy, but his pleasure was mixed with sadness at the thought that he had made no progress, so far as he could see, with his wooing of Nora Faynes. They had been together a good deal; she had been his partner in various games, but he seemed no "forrader."

That very afternoon he was going for a row with her on the little river which, at one part of the estate, widened into a large lake. He would have her to himself for an hour and—would he be able to summon up enough courage? On the second day he would be leaving Hilton and this might be his last chance.

Chatting agreeably they went down the river till they entered the lake, he rowing, she steering.

"Why don't you ask her if she—er—likes you?"

"I imagine that this lake was made at some distant period; it is not a natural formation, is it?" Alec paused a moment to look at Nora and listen to her answer.

"It was made by the orders of one of my ancestors for the purpose of giving pleasure to his bride," was the reply. "At least, that is the story. I suppose they, or she, used to row on it, but it must have cost him a lot of money to gratify that whim."

"Happy man to be able to gratify the wish of the woman he loved!" said Alec suddenly, nerving himself with an effort. "What does the cost matter, when it is done for love? Happy man, to have the opportunity of doing something for her. I wish I might be as fortunate."

In his excitement he pulled at the oars with all his strength, and made the boat almost leap into the centre of the lake. Nora gave a little cry that brought him to his senses.

"You frightened me!" she declared. "You pulled with such force that I thought the boat was going over. You pull more powerfully with one arm than the other."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Faynes," he said contritely. "I fear that I am very awkward, but my feelings got the better of me."

"I expect we shall reach the centre without another stroke of the oar," remarked Nora, with pretended innocence, although a faint flush appeared on her fresh cheeks. Her gaze was directed over his head, but she was watching his gleaming eyes and the eager expression on his countenance, while her heart beat somewhat more rapidly.

"*I* would like to do something for the woman I loved—for the woman I *love*—but where is the opportunity for *me?*"

He waited for an answer, but Nora was intently gazing at something over his head.

"There is no chance for me!" he continued bitterly. "It was never intended that I should do anything heroic to—— Hallo! What's wrong?"

He might well ask. The little boat was rapidly filling with water; so rapidly that it was evident that a tolerably big hole had been made in the bottom.

"The boat has a hole in it!" exclaimed Nora, turning slightly pale. "Row, row quickly, so that we get to the side before it fills! Oh, dear, we are too far out!"

It was true. They were in the very centre of the lake and the boat was filling so quickly that it would sink before even Alec's strong arms could urge it many yards through the water. Their feet were soaked now, and the water was coming higher and higher. Alec saw the danger, and rose to the occasion.

"We are in for a wetting, Miss Faynes, I fear, but it shall be nothing worse if my strength and knowledge of swimming can avail anything. Here is my bowler"—picking up the hat which he had taken off and substituted by a soft cap—"bale out as hard as you can while I row."

A few seconds sufficed to show that this expedient was useless, and Alec braced himself for the effort of a swim with a burden to the bank some fifty yards distant. His face was grave as he threw off his coat and vest.

"Can you swim, Miss Faynes?"

"Not a bit!" responded Nora in a hushed whisper. Her face was pale, but she tried to keep a brave expression on her face. "There is no one near enough to hear us if we shout, is there? You can swim?"

"A little," returned Alec, doubtfully. "What a fool I was not to practise swimming! You must let me hold you up with one hand while I strike out with the other."

"You must not sacrifice yourself for me!" said Nora, in a tone that was intended to be very determined, but was in reality a dismal failure.

"It is the chance I have longed for!" cried Alec. "I will

save you, if the effort kills me. I can at least prove my love, whether it is reciprocated or not."

The next moment they were in the water. Nora's flowing dress helped to keep her up at first, and she quietly obeyed his orders to trust to him and not become so frightened as to try to grasp him. How strong he was! He was anything but a good swimmer, but his strength and his love worked wonders, and they reached shallow water just as his strength was giving out. To a good swimmer the feat would have been almost insignificant, but to Alec it had been exhausting, and he sank on the ground, done up, as he after phrased it.

He was soon able to walk, and the two hurried along towards the house, where they received every attention. Alec was happy, for he felt that he had won a wife that afternoon.

He was sure of his conquest on the following morning, when he met Nora. Neither was, fortunately, any the worse for the adventure. They shook hands; not a word was spoken, but they looked into each other's eyes, and then he drew her unresisting to him and kissed her.

He was in the seventh heaven of delight all that morning, although he could not get a second *tête-à-tête* with his beloved one. Judge of his dismay then, when he succeeded in discovering her alone in the afternoon and was rebuffed by a flashing eye and a gesture of indignation.

"I thought you were a gentleman, and I find that you are a trickster, a man who would stoop to deceit to—to gain a woman's affections!"

Bewildered as he was by her words, crushed by her contempt, he could not help noticing how pretty she was in her anger.

"What is it, Nora?" he asked appealingly. "Those are hard words, and undeserved I have done nothing of which I am ashamed!"

"Then it takes a lot to shame you!" How hard and cruel she was! "Read that!"

She handed him a letter, which he at once recognised as the precious communication sent to him by Dick Faynes after the conversation in Alec's room. Mechanically he ran through it again, although the contents were burnt in his brain. The wording of that letter had entirely escaped him till now; even during the adventure on the water it had not occurred to him, strangely enough. This was what Dick had written:

"I'll arrange that affair for you, so that you can do something gallant in order to win my cousin. It will be as easy as A B C. You can manage it so that there will be no danger, and you must make a fuss about it, so that she will think a lot of you! Go for a row on the river, and get on the lake. I'll make a hole in the bottom of the boat and stop it up with a big bung which you can easily kick out. You will get a wetting, but what's that? Let me know if this suits you, and I'll have the hole ready for the day when I hear that the row is to come off."

"The boat has a hole in it!" exclaimed Nora, turning slightly pale.

And underneath the signature Alec had written: "Splendid, if you can manage it! But you can't!"

He had written the words jestingly, for the idea was absurd; but in cold black and white the words appeared like an assent to the plan. And Nora believed that he had carried out the scheme!

"I found that letter in my room this morning," said Nora coldly. "It must have dropped out of Dick's pocket when he came to see me yesterday afternoon. I understand now why he asked such peculiar questions about our terrible adventure, and why he looked serious when I told him that the boat filled in the *centre* of the lake! Perhaps I ought not to have read the letter, but something caught my eye, and I felt that I had a right to read it. And you agreed!" Oh, the scorn with which she uttered those last words!

"I did not!" protested Alec, writhing in mental pain. "I scoffed at the idea when the letter arrived. I knew nothing

Read "Love or Duty?"—our Coronation story.

Digitized by Google

of the hole in the boat, and I never dreamt that he would do such a thing!"

But she was obdurate; she had been played with, and her wounded vanity filled her heart to the exclusion of every other sentiment.

"You tricked me, pretended that you were a poor swimmer—deceived me!" She could say no more; her rage choked her. She was not only angry at the trick; she was angry also that this man was not what she believed him to be. She loved him, and he was unworthy!

"Stay here till I find Dick! You must!" (as she shook her head) "You owe me that much!"

He rushed off like a madman, and she remained motionless. Presently she heard Dick's voice.

"Here, gent—ly! You're jerking all the breath—out—of—me! I'm coming quickly enough, and there's another day to-morrow, isn't there?"

Then Alec burst into the room again, dragging Dick.

"Explain all about it, or I'll——" Alec stopped, unable to think of a threat sufficiently awful.

Dick shook himself, and smoothed his ruffled garments. He looked from Alec to Nora, recalling some of the incoherent remarks of Alec on the way, and then he seemed to realise the position. He went penitently to his cousin, took her hand and kissed her in a boyish affection.

"I did it, Nora. I knew Alec was chaffing me when he wrote that—I know his style, you see, and he told me so next day. But I thought it was a good idea and I carried it out. I thought there would be some sort of a fuss, and Alec would help you, and you would think a lot of him, and he is a good sort, you know. But I forgot that you might be in the middle of the lake! And—I think I'll go for a soldier or a clergyman, or something. I always seem to make a mess of things!"

There was no mistaking the young fellow's sincerity. Nora had only one lingering doubt, but she did not like to retract all she had said, it was so awkward to apologise! So she made the most of one point.

"But Alec—Mr. Buxton, I mean—he *must* have thought of it during the adventure."

"Suppose he did, what difference would it have made?" asked Dick, boldly championing his friend. "He couldn't have said 'This is nothing; we are only pretending. The water coming into the boat is only in fun; we are only making believe that we are getting wet and that the boat is sinking.' How could he? But I don't expect that he gave it a thought. It's strange how things slip your memory when you're so deeply in love as that. It was so with me and Nance Marsh. Oh, you needn't laugh! I *was* in love with that girl!"

In spite of herself, Nora had burst into a laugh that was half a cry on hearing this lucid and amusing explanation. Alec took advantage of this to bundle Dick out of the room and take Nora in his arms.

Dick Faynes is to be best man, although Nora says that he doesn't deserve to be.

George Day.

Briggs: "I have never told you about the smart things my little boy does and says, have I?" Braggs: "You never have." Briggs: "Then don't you think you can find it convenient to lend me £5?"

Chappie: "I'd just like to know what you mean by being engaged to both Cholly and me at once." Miss Pinkie: "Why, bless you, there is no harm done; you can't either of you afford to marry me, you know."

Magistrate: "It is very disgraceful that you should beat your wife so unmercifully." Prisoner: "Well, your worship, she aggrawated me by keepin' on sayin' she'd 'ave me up afore that bald-'eaded old 'umbug, meaning your worship." Magistrate: "You are discharged."

Damsel (fishing for compliments): "No, Captain Judson, I'm not going to the dance to-morrow night, for I hear there's to be a pretty girl from town present, and there will be no chance for poor me." Gallant but Inexperienced Officer: "Oh, do come; I don't like pretty girls."

Your Editor Chats.

I have had a letter from a subscriber, who tells me that she has hit upon a novel and most entertaining method of transforming an ordinary and uninteresting screen into a most delightful and striking piece of decoration. She has preserved all our recent pictorial covers, and has pasted them on to the screen, with a very pretty colour effect. Her friends, calling upon her, naturally want to know all about the pictures, and my correspondent then relates the story of each sketch as it has appeared in the paper, and thus has managed to provide her friends with many a half hour's pleasant entertainment, which she would otherwise have spent racking her brains for something to keep the conversation going. As the covers appear so she adds them to those already on the screen.

For **this week's Competition** I want you to make an English word out of the following letters: R, I, I, I, S, M, A, B, U, U, Q, L, E, E. There is no necessity for you to use every letter, but the competitor who sends in a word containing the most letters is, of course, the one to receive the first prize. This will take the form of a massive and really handsome **solid silver pencil-case,** while the ten competitors who come next will receive **cut glass, solid silver-topped scent-bottles** and **rolled gold charms.** As before, postcards only must be used, and these should be addressed to the "Competition Editor, *Short Stories*, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden." Efforts should reach us not later than first post on July 2nd.

By the way, two printer's errors crept into the result of our Rivers' Competition, published in the issue dated June 14th. The name of River No. 33 should be Awe instead of Awa as printed, and No. 57 should of course be Deel instead of Beel. Our reader can only account for the slips by the fact that we went to press just after Peace had been proclaimed!

I don't think I ever had such a large response to a competition as that which I received to the "Opinion Competition." The three most popular stories in the issue dated June 7th were, according to the consensus of opinion:

1. The Honeysuckle and the Bee.
2. The Sound of a Voice.
3. The Great Nag-a-Por Diamond.

Only five competitors gave them correctly in their right order, so the prize of £1 has been divided equally amongst them:

F. Holworthy, 2 Hammelton Road, Bromley.
Miss E. Daws, 45 Kent House Road, Beckenham.
A. MacPherson, 49 Mountjoy Square, Dublin.
Miss J. Wyllie, 14 Robb Street, Springburn.
Mrs Kingsworth, 202 New Road, Chatham.

Handsome gold-plated pencil-cases have been awarded to:

R. Robinson, 80 Palatine Road, Blackpool.
F. W. Brook, Ivy Cottage, Greenhead Road, Huddersfield.
L. H. Clark, 32 Beauval Road, Dulwich Rise, S.E.
H. Jones, 5 Afton Crescent, Paisley Road West, Glasgow.
F. W. Davies, 16 Brimmington Road, Peckham.
G. Page, 128 Sweetman Street, Wolverhampton.
W. Bull, 63 De Beauvoir Road, Reading.
H. Carton, 277 Hillman Street, Antrim Road, Belfast.
H. Somers, Special Works, Stanley Street, Sheffield.
A. H. Weaton, 210 Ferndale Road, Brixton.
G. Irving, 127 Hodge Lane, Salford.
C. Dowling, 5 Laurance Pountney Lane, E.C.
A. Barnes, 48 Dover Street, Unthank Road, Norwich.
F. Addison, 40 Margrove Park, near Guisbrough.
W. Rowland, 2 Stanley Place, Tranmere, Birkenhead.
C. Hayward, 9 South Street, Dorchester.
S. Thomas, Peterwell House, West Street, Builth Wells.
Miss A. Steele, 6 Barclay Ter., Beulah Rd., Walthamstow.
E. Christy, 48 Clifton Street, Garston, Liverpool.
Mrs. Hall, 30 Witham, Hull.
Mrs. Carsons, 23 Cumberland Market, Regent's Park, N.W.
H. Wyllie, 14 Robb Street, Springburn.
W. Snow, 72A Taff Street, Pontypridd.
G. Scotchmoor, 26 Morris Road, Poplar, E.
F. J. Wilson, 17 Miller Street, Liverpool.

Digitized by Google

A Perfect Gentleman.

FOGG has a neat way of turning a compliment now and then. Seeing the elderly Miss Pangley in the street the other day, he tried to avoid her, but could not succeed. When they met, said Miss Pangley: "Oh, you naughty man, you wanted to cut me!" Replied Fogg blandly: "I should be cutting a pretty figure shouldn't I?" Miss Pangley tells her friend, Miss Sagegreen, that Mr. Fogg is a perfect gentleman.

Preparing the Way.

JOHN: "Sallie, ef I was ter ask you if you'd marry me, do you think you'd say yes?" Sallie: "I—er—think so." John: "We-ell, ef I ever get over this 'ere bashfulness I'll ask yer some o' these times."

Made a Mistake.

LADY (to tramp): "No, I shall not give you anything. You look strong and hearty, and well able to work." Tramp: "Ah, ma'am, you shouldn't judge people by their looks, I thought you looked a kind-hearted lady, but I find you ain't."

Probably.

LITTLE GIRL: "When your feets is cold you mus' put zem in cold, awful cold water—mamma says so." Little Boy: "What good does that do?" Little Girl: "I don't know, but I s'pects it makes us think our feet wasn't so cold as we thought they was."

He Knew Too Much.

LITTLE Johnny had been told he must be punished, but that he might choose between a whipping and being shut up in a dark closet. After a moment's painful thought he said: 'Well, papa, if mamma'll do it, I think I'll be whipped; but if you are going to whip me I think I'll be shut up."

The Perfume was Familiar.

THE latest anecdote about an old lady who thinks that she "knows everything" is how she went to visit her sister, and as she entered the room her nieces said: "Good evening, auntie, we are glad you have come: we are going to have tableaux this evening." "Yes, I know," was the reply, "I smelt 'em."

She Knew Johnny.

"Now," said the teacher, "suppose I should give you and Johnny an apple divided into four parts, and Johnny was to take two of the pieces, how many would you have left?" "None," answered the little girl. "None," echoed the teacher "I'm afraid you don't know the lesson." "'Tain't that, ma'am, you don't know Johnny."

Mrs. Grundy's Waist.

A LITTLE schoolgirl asked her teacher what was meant by "Mrs. Grundy." The teacher replied that it meant "the world." Some days after the teacher asked the geography class to which this little bud of promise belonged: "What is a zone?" After some hesitation the girl brightened up and replied: "I know. It's a belt round Mrs. Grundy's waist!"

Glad of the Opportunity.

A YOUNG fellow who had just begun to shave for a beard stepped into a hairdresser's shop, and after a great swagger desired to be shaved. The hairdresser went through the usual movements, and the prig jumped up with a flourish and exclaimed: "What is the charge?" "Oh, no charge," replied the barber. "No charge? How is that?" "Why, I am always thankful when I can get a soft calf-skin to sharpen my razor on."

Many a Time.

OLD LADY (in a shoe shop): "Have you felt slippers?" Small Boy Assistant (solemnly): "Yes, ma'am, many a time."

Possibilities.

HOGGS: "Do you think that a man can serve two masters?" Henpeck: "Well, sometimes. He may have a wife and grown daughter, you know!"

An Awful Catastrophe.

HUSBAND: "My dear, we will have to begin to economise at once." Wife: "Dear me! What has happened?" Husband: "Cigars have gone up."

The Height of Meanness.

THE meanest man on record is the one who said recently to a young lady: "No, I'd rather not have you take my arm. It does no good and wears out my coat sleeve."

Alive to Opportunities.

"YOUR behaviour is most singular, sir," said a young lady to a gentleman who had just stolen a kiss. "If that's all," said he, "I will soon make it plural."

Misunderstood.

HOPEFUL YOUTH: "Is Miss De Cash in?" Servant: "Yis, sor." Hopeful Youth: "Is she engaged?" Servant: "Yis, sor; but he ain't here this evening. Come in."

How to Tell.

GEORGE: "Suppose a fellow's best girl gets angry when you ask for a kiss." Henry: "Take it without asking." George: "Suppose she gets angry then." Henry: "Then you've got some other fellow's girl."

His Means of Support.

WOMAN: "You seem to be a strong, healthy man. Can't you get along?" Man: "No, mum. I hain't had no means of support since last July." Woman: "Were you thrown out of work?" Man: "No, mum, but me wife broke her arm, and she's not been able to do a week's washing since."

On Kisses.

AN eminent surgeon says that a "kiss on the lips ought to be felt at least twenty minutes afterwards, and that kissing produces a sensation which the system requires to keep it in a healthy condition." Bless his dear old heart, there is a man who thoroughly understands a good thing.

Heaven on Earth.

LITTLE BOY: "I wish mammas went to business every day and papas stayed home and kep' house." Auntie: "What for?" Little Boy: "'Cause mammas always buys sweets w'en they goes out, and papas never tries to keep things clean w'en they stays in."

Too Candid.

MISS PLAINFACE (an heiress): "Mr. Cashunter, you are the first man who ever kissed me in my life. Do you believe me when I tell you this?" Her Affianced: "Believe you? Well, I should say so!" And now the engagement is declared off.

Pa's Grace.

LITTLE LUCY (to minister who has just finished a very long grace before dinner): "My papa don't say all that grace." Minister: "What does your papa say, my little girl?" Little Lucy: "Oh, my papa lifts the covers and says, 'Oh, my, what a dinner!'"

Wanted His Fee.

"I HOPE you don't associate with that man I saw you speak to in the street just now!" "Associate with him! What do you take me for? That man, sir, is one of the most rascally, corrupt, sneaking, under-handed, low-down, villainous, and depraved scoundrels that ever managed to keep out of gaol!" "I know it. But why are you on speaking terms with him at all?" "Why, I'm—er—his lawyer."

Behind the Green Shutters.

What was there Concealed, and how it was Brought to Light.

It was the only house in the lane. The lane itself was in that somewhat lonely district lying between Camberwell Green and Dulwich.

It is a district much affected by tramps and loaters of every description, who are ever on the prowl for plunder, when it may be annexed without trouble to themselves.

The lane in question was only, so to speak, a sort of land creek of the greater sea of the main road. Two tall, ghostly elm trees kept guard at the entrance to it, while its blind end was bounded by a dilapidated, tarred, weather-boarded palisade; from behind which rose a dark tangle of trees and undergrowth, depressing in its look of wild neglect and hopeless desolation.

A gate there was in the palisade, but with nothing on it to indicate the name of the house within.

Even the lane had no official designation, being known to all and sundry as "Dog Kennel" Lane; tradition having it that a previous tenant of the property had kept a pack of large dogs, to the widely-expressed terror of the neighbourhood.

At the time, however, of this story, the dogs had long since disappeared, but the name had stuck.

From the main road the house was plainly visible; that is, the first and second floors. It was a brick house, square, uncompromising, and gloomy in its two-hundred-year-old garb.

One peculiarity it had; one, indeed, which invariably struck strangers as being queerly quaint.

All the windows of the first storey, facing the main road (the front of the house, in fact) were provided with outside green, louvred shutters which, both by night and by day, were closely shut to.

The people living thereabouts were tired of speculating as to the meaning and possible object of this evident desire on the part of the occupant or occupants to secure secrecy for someone or something.

The present tenant had been in possession some three years or more, but during the whole of that period had been seen by no one.

Whether or no there were any others in the family none could say. The coming had been in the night; the policeman on the nearest beat declaring that all he had seen, about two hours after midnight, was a large pantechnicon van turn into the lane and straightway disappear through the gates, opened on the instant and shut to again immediately. Asked if he saw the van pass out, and if he had questioned the men in connection with it, he replied in the negative.

"I'll swear that van never came out!" he said, "for I watched the end of the lane right up to the time I was relieved, and you may take it from me that my eyes are as good as most people's, and perhaps better."

That settled it; and when no sign of life appeared about the place during the whole three years which followed, it came to be pretty generally allowed that a mystery of no common sort concealed itself behind the green shutters of the first floor of the house in the lane.

And so it might have gone on indefinitely as an unsolved mystery but for an unexpected accident, and its consequences.

It was a lovely day in August, and Hugh Charteris, crack automobilist, and motor record breaker on Continental soil, tooled along the King's highway in his "Panhard," at a speed hardly in strict harmony with the notions of the Surrey County Fathers.

He was alone, for he liked the solitude and independence of absolutely exclusive self-management.

Right away from the start from his Kensington flat his drive had been without a hitch. Then, as he came abreast of Dog Kennel Lane, the machine, without a sign of warning, suddenly stopped dead.

The shock projected him over the front of the car, landing him on one shoulder in a heap on the road.

What to do for the moment he did not know. The shock of the fall and a nasty bruise or two making him to feel just a bit bewildered.

Then two or three road skirmishers put in an appearance.

"Here!" cried Charteris to one such, "who lives in the house at the end there?"

"Dunno, guv'nor."

"Well, bang at the gate and get somebody—anybody—to come and help me put the thing right."

"It ain't no good, mister," put in another tired-looking member of the tramp tribe, "they gives nothin' away there."

"My good man, I didn't say they did! Just do as I tell you, and—it will be half-a-crown in your pocket."

Upon this, three pairs of semi-shod feet moved in the direction of the gate.

Before, however, they could reach it, Charteris, lifting his eyes to get a view of the house, saw one of the midmost shutters part ever so little, a small white hand, with just a suspicion of a whiter face, appearing in the shadow of the opening.

Always impulsive, and ever keenly alive to the romantic in life, the disabled motorist raised himself by an effort on to his feet, supporting himself against the side of the car.

Shouting to the three men to "hold on!" he waved his white handkerchief, as vigorously as he was able, with his uninjured hand.

Whoever it was that was behind the shutters must have seen his signal of distress, as they must certainly have heard his voice, when raised to stay the tramps' besiegement of the gate.

Anyway, the shutter was quickly closed, and help seemed further away than ever.

"That was a girl's face—if a pale one, and a pretty girl, too—or my eyes deceive me. Here, you fellows! take that, and be off!" (throwing half a dozen shillings among them). "I'll manage this business myself."

Then a policeman strolled up from the direction of Camberwell, and to him Charteris appealed for protection for his machine while he tried his own fortune at the gate in the palisade.

"Lor' bless you, sir!" said the constable, with a half smile, "you may knock and ring all day, and it'll be no use. Even *we* don't know who it is lives there, or whether it's man

Digitized by Google

or woman. Everything, rates, taxes, rent, is paid by a big firm of lawyers in Westminster, while food and stores are brought in from town twice a week at night-time, in a small covered cart, which, somehow, always gets away again without any of us being able to interview the driver. There's only this one gate, so I suppose they manage to dodge us. What for, I don't know, for we couldn't touch 'em."

"Well, policeman, all you say only whets my curiosity to know more. Beside, I want help to right this confounded thing."

He fully expected to find the gate bolted and barred against all comers. To his astonishment, and to the astonishment of the onlooking officer, the gate responded to a slight push of the hand.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said A. R. 1, his eyes opened to their widest. "Why, I'll swear that, an hour ago, when I came round, and tried it, it was as fast as the gate of Holloway Castle."

He looked still more in amazement as Hugh Charteris, passing through, the gate closed quickly after him.

"Here! I say! I can't stand by this car all day! Come back! What are you going to do about it?"

But Charteris was either out of earshot, or designedly "played deaf."

The three tramps had moved off at sight of authority, but there was a little crowd of suburban idlers gathered round the derelict, busily picking up crumbs of curiosity.

Leaving the car to whatever Fate might have in store for it, the bewildered policeman, in sheer desperation, made for the gate in pursuit of the car's owner.

An attempt, however, to successfully repeat the latter's "open sesame" experiment ended in utter failure, for the gate was now, in his own words, "as fast as the gate of Holloway Castle."

A. R. 1 was not a superstitious man, but he began to think that, after all, the old wives' fables of the country-side that knew him as a boy, might have a certain amount of truth in them.

Soon came along the Inspector, who quickly decided that the car must be trundled to the station-yard, seeing that its owner had other business on hand—could not be found, in fact.

"The law won't allow us to force an entrance," said the big man in reply to the suggestion of a bystander, eager for exploration of the "forbidden land." "Whoever lives there haven't done anything. If there was murder now going on inside, or a burglary, or anything like that, it would be different."

"Yes, sir," said his subordinate; "but how about the gate being locked and unlocked like a conjuring trick—and those shutters at the first-floor windows that are always shut?"

"Yes, of course. I know—I know!" said the other, with a superior air of contemptuous repression; "but you can't say anything to a man for doing as he likes with his gates, so long as he doesn't wilfully encourage the thieving sort; while if he chooses to close every shutter inside or outside his house, you can't take upon you to say he shan't."

Plenty of willing hands volunteered to shift the car to the station, the Inspector accompanying the expedition, to see that no trick was played.

A. R. 1, in obedience to orders, remained behind to wait possible events, and, as the car was the chief object of public attraction, found himself left alone with his thoughts.

It might have been ten minutes after the departure of the others that the silence was suddenly broken by the muffled sound of a pistol shot in the direction of the house, as if the weapon had been fired inside the building.

Probably A. R. 1 was ignorant of the axiom that "the man who hesitates is lost," but he at least acted in the spirit of it, for, throwing instructions, prudence, and everything else to the winds, he settled his helmet firmly on his head, drew, and tightly gripped his truncheon, and sought a spot in the fence where he could more easily climb over. The gate was out of the question, being higher than the fence, and cruelly spiked at top.

"Inspector or no Inspector! I'll see what's up; and what's become of that motor chap!" he said, as he struggled over the rotten paling, and dropped down on the other side into a mass of thorny undergrowth.

Before he could pull himself together a hand was at his throat, and a man's harsh voice hissed in his ear: "If you move a hair, you're a dead man!"

* * * * *

When Hugh Charteris, after he had passed through the gate, found, by the noise of key-turning and bolt-shooting, that he was virtually a prisoner, his first thought was to turn and demand an explanation of the individual who had locked and barred him in.

But he could see nobody.

The air of mystery and secrecy about the place was beginning to worry and to exasperate him.

Try as he would, however, he could not shake off the impression that somewhere within the uncanny house there was someone whose life was destined to mingle with, and run parallel, with his own.

It was this idea which decided him to penetrate the seeming mystery, and to give his help to anyone, man, woman or child, who might be in need of it.

In pursuance of this determination, and forgetting all about his property in the lane, he moved along the weedy, dirt-strewn path towards the house.

For a man who was a barrister (if briefless), Charteris was, as we have said, strongly tinged with the "romantic." This was not the first adventure of his life by many, and Charlie Thane, his especial chum and chamber mate in Hare Court, Temple, was for ever telling him that one of those days he would find himself entangled in some captive princess' web, and disposed of beyond redemption.

But he was rich, and rich folks can bridge over the nastiest rapids in life's stream.

But however it was, he went on, marvelling at the desolation and neglect around him, until he came directly in front of the house itself.

It was early Georgian in style, with a pedimented portico of four columns.

The house was set on a low terrace, approached by three short flights of shallow stone steps.

Marching boldly up to the door, he happened to cast his eyes upward, and again saw one of the centre shutters open gently, a small white hand grasping it, and a pale face, set in a mass of dark hair, looking down directly at him.

Before he could speak a piece of paper, weighted with a piece of coal, fell at his feet.

Looking up again, after he had stooped and picked up the paper, it was to find the shutter closed.

Hastily freeing the paper from the coal and smoothing it out on his hand, he read, in a woman's scrawl:

"My father was shot this morning by an agent of the South American Brotherhood, to which he belonged, and which believed that he had betrayed it to the English Government. They seek, too, to destroy me, but I have locked and bolted myself in this room. As one who looks to me to be strong and brave, I intreat you to get me out of here. Be cautious, however, for there are four men about the place acting under the orders of the agent, who himself struck my father down. I am in the front middle room on the first floor. They seek my life because I have seen the murderer's face, and can recognise and denounce him.

"UNA H."

Crushing the note into his pocket, he darted up the steps.

Don't forget the competition on page 819.

Digitized by Google

The heavy front door was wide open; right ahead of him stretched upwards a broad flight of stairs.

At the foot of these he paused a minute to listen; but all was silent as the grave.

Then he saw on his left, ajar, a green baize door, studded with gilt nails.

Something prompted him to push the door wide open, the act bringing him face to face with the victim referred to in the letter of Una H.

He was not by any means an old man, although his closely cropped hair and beard were snowy white.

He lay on his back on the ground between the window and a large library table.

A small blue mark on the left temple told the cause of death.

On the breast of his waistcoat, and partially concealed by his coat, was pinned a dirty piece of paper, on which was printed in rude ink characters:

"Leopold Heath, a spy in the service of the United States Government. Died August 17th, 1901. B. S. S."

Obviously if the daughter was to be saved from a similar fate, no time was to be lost.

The window looked out upon the back garden, and Charteris stepped towards it to take a rapid glance out through it.

Midway, a man's face peered in, saw the intruder, snatched a revolver from his pocket, and fired point blank at him.

The bullet must have been deviated from its course by being fired through glass, for though the aim was true, there was no result, save that Charteris felt the windage of the missile as it whizzed past his right ear.

Giving no time for another attempt, the young man turned and sprinted up the stairs in true 'varsity fashion.

For a moment, on gaining the first floor landing, he stood still, in doubt as to which was the middle front room.

The difficulty was settled without any movement on his part, for right by where he was standing a door opened from the inside and a young girl, with the key in her hand, issued hurriedly from the room and clutched him by the arm.

It was his injured member, and he winced with pain, till his face was almost the colour of her own.

"Oh! did I hurt you? You are wounded! I heard the shot!"

"No—no!" he assured her. "It is all right! Miss Una Heath, I presume! But there is no time for social courtesy, I have to think how I am going to get you out of this!"

"Look!—that man!—the one who killed my father! coming up the staircase!"

As indeed he was.

Charteris, bidding his fair companion to keep in the open doorway, raised his right foot and shot it out full in the face of the fellow as he gained the top stair.

With a yell that echoed through the house, the man crashed down the whole flight, rolled nearly the length of the stone-paved hall, and lay still.

Not staying to investigate the other's injuries, Charteris, taking the girl by the hand, passed, almost at a run, down the stairs, and out through the front door on to the terrace.

Here the pair were met by A. R. 1 without his helmet, his coat half torn from off his back and scratched and bruised of face.

"Ah! I'm a bit too late, I see! Been having rather a rough time of it among the bushes yonder, but I've settled my gentleman, I fancy. Anyway, I've got the cuffs on him, and he'll have to explain things, I'm thinking, to-morrow morning at Lambeth."

"You've got one of them, then?" cried Charteris, gleefully. "I've changed my opinion about you, policeman."

"Didn't know you had one, sir; but thank you all the same."

"Well, never mind about that, what I want you to do is to get outside as soon as you can and see if my motor is usable."

"Your motor, sir! why it's gone to the station!"

"What! locked up? Well, send someone to bring it up—quick—I know what's wrong with it. A spanner and a screwdriver will put things straight again. But hark! What's that?"

"Sounds like a motor, sir!"

It is a motor! My motor! Come on!—Miss Heath!—forgive me! but we shall have to lift you over the fence, for the rascals either have the key of the gate or have thrown it away."

"I don't mind!" she said. "But what about my poor father's body?"

"I will see that all is done which should be done in that matter. Trust me! You will, will you not?"

"Trust you, yes—Mr. ——"

"Charteris. Hugh Charteris, at your service! Now, please! Constable, you get over first, and I will hand this young lady to you!"

In less than five minutes the three were in the lane to see and to hear the sometime disabled motor car, now restored and in its right mind, and ready for the road again.

In the driver's seat was Charlie Thane, who told his friend how the Inspector, finding Charteris' card case on the floor of the car, wired to Hare Court.

He, Thane, came on the instant; soon repaired the damage, and reached the scene of action in the very nick of time.

"Constable, get a day off and come to Hare Court to-morrow I shall have something for you—there's my card. Miss Heath, if you will let me drive you to my mother's at Sydenham, she will be only too pleased to look after you."

This was only the beginning of the end, for Hare Court saw very little of Hugh Charteris during the days that Una Heath stayed with Lady Charteris at Sydenham.

It was impossible but that these two, brought together so strangely, should, both of them, learn to love.

Some day, Una says, "she will tell the man to whom she has given her whole heart, the story of her father's life, and why it was that he elected to live in so secret a fashion."

Meanwhile they are both of them very happy, for the memory of a terrible time is rapidly softening away.

* * * * *

A. R. 1 duly received a substantial reward from Charteris, and had, moreover, the satisfaction of hearing a long sentence of penal servitude pronounced upon the captive of his own bow and spear. As to the man who had shot Leopold Heath, United States' spy, and Una's father, when the police, in force entered the place, they had no difficulty in securing him, as he was in an unconscious condition.

In due course, on Una's evidence, his life paid the penalty for his crime. The remaining two of the gang were found later on concealed in the shrubbery.

Ralph Enderby.

No Need Now.

"Do you pray for your husband?" asked the minister of Mrs. Biff. "I don't need to," replied she, "I've got him."

Why, Indeed?

"But you certainly ought to consider the wishes of your parents." "Why should I? They didn't marry to please me."

Ambition.

"I'd like to be rich," said Tommy. "How rich?" asked his sister. "Oh," replied the young man, after some thought, 'rich enough to wear my Sunday clothes every day."

Nothing Between Them.

He: "Is there much between George and Hilda?" She: "I saw them sitting on the sofa last evening, and you couldn't have put a knife between them."

YOU CAN BEGIN TO-DAY.

OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION.

By HENRY FARMER.

Author of "Fettered Lives," "As a Man Sows," "In the Grip of the Law," etc.

For New Readers.

A BELT full of diamonds has been stolen from a safe belonging to Mr. Mansfield, a wealthy banker, by Seaton Revelle (who is a friend of the banker's) and an accomplice named Benjamin Beard. Revelle accuses Alec Scarsdale, who is in love with Esther, Mr. Mansfield's daughter, of the crime, and he is sentenced to sixteen years' penal servitude. Mr. Crump, late Chief-Inspector at Scotland Yard, feeling sure Scarsdale is innocent and Revelle is guilty, sets himself to prove the latter's guilt. Mr. Mansfield as fully believes in Scarsdale's guilt as does Esther in his innocence, and his friendship for Revelle increases. Revelle constantly visits the banker's house in an endeavour to win Esther's love, but so far has not prospered at all. While talking with the girl one day, Mr. Mansfield's new maid, Vance, enters the room with a tray bearing cups of coffee. No sooner does she catch sight of Revelle than she drops the tray, and, pointing to Revelle, screams: "That—that man is *my* husband!" But Revelle, by sheer force of will, compels her to acknowledge her mistake. In the meanwhile, Scarsdale, who has got into trouble for attacking a warder who jested with him about Esther, is taken seriously ill, and placed in the prison hospital. At about this time Esther and Mr. Crump are walking together when they observe Vance about to throw herself into a reservoir. Crump stops her just in time—he and Esther taking her back to the Woodlands. Later on Revelle and Benny drive up in a dogcart, and suddenly, while talking to Esther, Revelle turns deadly pale. Crump is standing by, and quickly sees the reason for his emotion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I Would not Harm this Gentleman's Reputation."

BENNY BEARD'S whole attention was centred on the cob's ears; for he looked upon them as a kind of barometer. When they dropped it was generally a forewarning that the animal would rise up on its hind legs, or indulge in some kind of unpleasant antic that would necessitate holding on. He did not see the grey shadow steal across Revelle's face, nor the reason.

But "Mr. Penworthy" was no longer scrutinising his note-book. Had Benny realised the real identity of the unassuming little man with the note-book, he would probably have experienced an anxiety greater even than that with which the cob inspired him.

Esther turned, saw what Crump had seen, and understood the reason of the grey shadow that darkened Seaton Revelle's face.

Vance, looking like, and moving like a ghost, was gliding towards them. Mrs. Tilley, in whose charge she had been left, was panting after her. She caught her up before she could reach the gates, and, taking her arm, spoke to her coaxingly and in a low voice, but Vance freed herself and glided on, her spiritless eyes fastened on Revelle.

Crump's eyes—small, but wonderfully comprehensive eyes—flashed from one face to the other, from the seeming gentleman to the plainly, neatly-dressed maid-servant, who moved and looked like an automaton. To a casual onlooker the scene would have presented nothing out of the commonplace, but to the little man it was essentially dramatic. It was in reality a breathless moment. The atmosphere seemed quiet enough, but it was highly charged. A bolt from the blue might be expected at any second now.

Revelle's hands tightened on the reins. His mouth assumed a curious, set look, and he fastened his eyes steadily, fixedly, on the figure moving towards him. Of those present, two only realised how great was the strain upon him—himself and Crump!

Vance dropped her eyes, and came to a standstill beside Esther.

"Vance," said Esther in a low, gentle voice, "you must go back to the house!"

"Yes, miss, yes, miss! But I saw this gentleman"—she raised her head and turned her face towards Seaton Revelle, but did not meet his eyes—"and I have come to say again that it was a mistake, last night. I am so sorry. I would not harm this gentleman's reputation for worlds. It was a mistake. I ask your pardon, sir!"

It took a great deal to make Crump hold his breath, but he had been doing so. He was breathing normally again now. It was as if a coin had been spinning in the air, but i had fallen now, and Crump was telling himself that Seaton Revelle had won the toss.

Revelle bent forward.

"My good woman, please say no more about it!"

For one moment Vance raised her eyes. They dilated as they met his, then she dropped them, and, turning on her heels, suffered Mrs. Tilley to lead her back to the house!

Benny Beard was all eyes and ears now. Revelle had told him of the episode of the evening before, making light of it, at the same time pointing out that, but for the woman's subsequent denial and admission of her mistake, it might have been deucedly awkward.

"By Jove!" thought Benny, "but when the Marquis sets his mouth like that it's a sure sign that something's very much the matter. The woman spoke as if he had mesmerised her. He always was a hot 'un, the Marquis. I wonder if he was telling me the truth this morning. Lord! but I hope we are not in for any complications!"

And Benny, who was cast in a weaker mould than the iron-nerved man beside him, was conscious of a decided qualm of uneasiness.

The rather strained silence that followed was broken by Revelle.

Digitized by Google

"Miss Mansfield," he said, "this is awfully painful. Poor woman, I'm sincerely sorry for her!"

"She ought not to have been allowed out of the house," answered Esther in a low voice, "if you will excuse me, Mr. Revelle, I will go and see to her!"

Revelle raised his hat. Esther moved away to the house.

"Morning, Penworthy!" cried Revelle, lightly touching the cob with the whip.

"Good morning to you, sir!" responded Mr. Penworthy, deferentially raising his hat; then to himself as the trap rattled away, "a pretty pair of rascals, indeed; but the Prince of Darkness, they say, is entitled to his dues, and I must admit that Mr. Revelle displayed a most masterly self-control in a most nerve-trying situation. Phew! For a moment I thought that there was going to be some direct reference to Jim! Of course, I may be utterly wrong, and it's a conclusion on my part, but I have very strong suspicions on the subject of Jim's identity. Poor woman, poor woman! Absolutely cowed! Out of her reason and haunted by an unreasoning dread that in some way or other she may betray Jim. No, I don't think Jim was drowned. But I'm glad that there was no startling *denouement*. It would have been premature. I am hoping that, given rope enough, those rascals will hang themselves. We want proof, complete proof, of Alec Scarsdale's innocence. Mr. Revelle is living in pretty style at The Firs. A place like that wants a lot of keeping up. Well, we shall see what we shall see!"

Crump shut up his note-book with a snap, and sighed. Then, dismissing what was evidently a sad thought, he gave a little chuckle.

"Ah, Mr. Revelle, you're not the first man who has made a big mistake in estimating a woman. Yes, yes, yes! And you are coolly telling yourself—I like your infernal impertinence—that Miss Mansfield is gradually forgetting Alec Scarsdale, and that there is no reason why you should not step into his shoes. Very nice, indeed! A rich banker's only child! Go on, my dear sir, in that belief. I wish for nothing more than that at present! Go on, my dear sir, telling yourself that you are on the road to success!"

Again the little man chuckled.

"I am very pleased indeed with her—God bless her! She has a very hard part to play, and she is playing it gamely, bravely! Ah, dear me! I wish I could look upon these things more from an impersonal point of view; that should be the attitude of your true detective; but unfortunately I can't, and that's why I'm so afraid of making a mess of this business. So much human happiness depends upon it, and if only I could treat it impersonally I should do better. As it is I am over-anxious, I'm liable to be in too much of a hurry. I do so want to put an end to her suffering. I shall have to watch myself very carefully. I must preach to myself what I am always preaching to her—the gospel of patience. Dear me! The older I get, the worse I get. My dear fellow, *do* bear in mind that admirable proverb, 'The more haste the less speed!'"

It was testimony this, to the kindliness of the little man's heart. The heartache that Esther was bravely masking from the world, he realised, and it caused him keen pain. Over a quarter of a century's active detective work had not hardened him in the slightest.

A moment later, the gardener having joined him, he was engaged in very earnestly explaining a design of his for a flower-bed, and a scheme of colour that he fancied would be most effective.

"She was too quick for me, miss!" Mrs. Tilley was explaining to Esther. "The doctor said she might go out so long as someone was with her, and I thought perhaps a little walk would do her good; and then she caught sight of Mr. Revelle in his dog-cart, and glided off before I could stop her. Poor thing, goodness knows, I don't want her to be shut up, but I shall be thankful, miss, when my responsibility is at an end. Peters and Allen are with her now. She's just sitting quiet and talking to herself about Jim—I suppose he was her husband that was. Drowned at sea from what she says, poor thing!"

Esther sighed. The grim happenings of that early morning had affected her deeply, had told on her nerves. She went to the room where Vance was now, two maid-servants with her. Vance looked at her for a moment dully as though she were a stranger. Then her eyes lighted up a little.

"Can I do anything for you, Vance?"

"No, miss, thank you,"—she recognised her now—"but don't let him break your heart as he broke——"

She stopped abruptly. A shadowy look of cunning stole over her face.

"I say things, and I don't know what I'm saying. I was thinking you were someone else, miss, and I wasn't myself!"

She laughed vacantly; then, clasping her hands together, started to rock to and fro, crooning out in a tuneless voice—

"Up in a balloon, boys, up in a balloon!
Flying up sky-high, boys!
Trying to reach the moon!"

It was indescribably uncanny. When Esther reached her own room she was shivering. Was it possible that the man whom she forced herself to treat outwardly as a friend was responsible for this? How horrible! Her hands twitched nervously. Or was she allowing her imagination to run away with her?

Almost mechanically she drew out the envelope that Crump had given her and opened it. What was it that Tom Jackson—faithful Tom Jackson—had sent her?

Ah, a letter!

Then she caught sight of the handwriting. A low cry burst from her lips. *His* writing! Her eyes dimmed with blinding tears. It was all but twelve months since she had received a letter from him—the letter scrawled in the police cell!

Hungrily she read the letter. It was addressed to Tom Jackson. It was formal, almost cold. She realised why, but her heart ached with an unsatisfied feeling. It told her so little about him. He thanked Jackson for his letter. He wrote that he was feeling well and strong. She caught her breath with a little choking sound. Her name was not there, yet, in spite of that, he had contrived to send her a message.

"Please give my love to the one other person besides yourself who, thank God, still believes in me!"

Knowing that every word would be read by the prison authorities, that was all that Alec Scarsdale could trust himself to write. His love was too sacred a thing to be laid bare for others to read.

Esther pressed the paper feverishly to her lips. She understood, but an unsatisfied craving for something more filled her heart.

She sank down on her knees and prayed for the man she loved, prayed that God might give him strength to bear it all! Then she rose and placed the paper very near to her heart.

"'To the one other person besides yourself!'" she whispered softly. He did not know that there were others now, knew nothing of the kindly little man and the other young constable who were enlisted on his side and were fighting for him. And Esther told herself that she had much to be thankful for. Since her return she had only seen Tom Jackson once. He had been on duty at the time. His honest countenance had flushed under his helmet as he had saluted her, and stammered out that he hoped he saw her well. She must find opportunity to see him and thank him. She silently thanked God for these friends who helped to make her loneliness bearable, who were unselfishly working for the man she loved.

Meantime, the dog-cart, bearing Revelle and Benny, was rattling along at a spanking pace towards Lord Normanhurst's magnificent place, The Towers.

"Marquis," Benny was whispering a little uneasily, "she was—is a complete stranger to you? It *was* a mistake?"

He watched Revelle out of the corners of his eyes.

"Never set eyes on her before the other night!" answered Revelle, his eyes fixed ahead, and his hands working with the strain of keeping the cob in hand. "She's clean out of her mind. She's to be taken to the County Asylum this afternoon. It might have been deuced awkward, but both

Mansfield and Esther had the sense to see that it was an obvious mistake. Let's drop the subject!"

Benny clutched hold of his seat and held on.

"For mercy's sake, Marquis, take it more gently round the turns!"

The dogcart had cut a corner very finely and dashed between great gates into a magnificent park. In the distance a castellated building was just visible—The Towers.

"Mansfield and Esther," said Revelle, "are going to dine with me at The Firs some time—they've promised me. It would be rather nice if I could get Normanhurst and Lady Normanhurst to come too. The night of the concert would probably suit all parties best. We could have a quiet little dinner first, and then all go on to the schoolroom for the concert afterwards"—he threw back his head and laughed—"I'm awfully looking forward to your comic songs, Benny. You will make a big hit!"

Benny looked a little uncomfortable. It was all very well for the Marquis—he possessed style—hobnobbing with the swells, but he himself was not so much at home in their presence.

"Marquis, you're playing a daring game!"

"It's worth it, and I'm playing to win, too!"

He pointed to The Towers with his whip.

"That's the next place down on my list. My fellow, Railton, is already on very good terms with Normanhurst's butler, and is making himself familiar with the interior. No immediate hurry, Benny, but it will have to be sooner or later. I've been spending money pretty freely lately, and funds won't hold out for ever. And——"

He paused. He was thinking of Esther now. Benny realised.

"Marquis," he whispered, pointing to The Towers, "it's a daring, dangerous game, that! I wish to Heaven that we could stop where we are, without running further risk, but if you've made up your mind, I shall be in with you; but I wish you'd chuck that idea of yours about the banker's daughter; let her alone. I don't believe she's forgotten him. Somehow I feel that she's playing a game with you! And I'm—well, I'm awfully sorry for her, and every time I see her I feel a brute!"

Revelle shrugged his shoulders.

"Benny," he said quietly, "I'm open to make a bet with you!"

"What's the wager?"

Revelle did not answer for a moment. A pale, lifeless face had suddenly intruded itself into his thoughts. But his hesitation was only momentary. He would make his bet, nevertheless.

"I'll lay you an even twenty pounds, Benny, that before the next twelve months are out Esther Mansfield will have promised to marry me!"

"Done," answered Benny, "and, Marquis, that twenty pounds are as good as in my pocket now!"

"You think so?" said Revelle.

Then he smiled and showed his white teeth.

And only a little while before Crump had been saying to himself:

"Go on, my dear sir, in that belief; I wish for nothing more than that at present! Go on, my dear sir, telling yourself that you are on the road to success!"

There was a brief silence, then Revelle spoke again.

"I wish to goodness that I hadn't let myself in for this balloon business. It's going to involve an enormous amount of trouble! By the way, Lady Eliza—she's a lady in her own right, don't you know, Benny—has most magnificent diamonds! If she dines with us you'll probably get some idea of their beauty and value—that is, if she wears the genuine articles. She's got a complete duplicate set in paste, and it's deuced difficult to distinguish between them. Between ourselves, the genuine articles have been in pawn before now, while her ladyship has apparently been wearing them. She's frightfully extravagant, and it takes Normanhurst all his time to make both ends meet—big place to keep up, and so on, and rents down!"

"Very interesting, Marquis," said Benny, "you're as good as a 'Burke's Peerage,' but how does this all apply?"

Revelle laughed,

"Well, Lady Eliza's diamonds are heavily insured, and the hard-uppishness at The Towers is generally known. And if, one day, the diamonds were stolen, it wouldn't be surprising if Lady Eliza were suspected of having had a hand in it herself. That sort of thing has happened before now, you know!"

"You're a deep 'un, Marquis!"

"Of course, it will want a lot of careful thinking out, and a little leading up to; but I can't help thinking it's rather a brilliant idea!"

A few moments later Revelle reined up in front of The Towers.

Two footmen opened the door. A pompous butler hovered in the background. A groom appeared magically and went to the cob's head.

Benny followed Revelle into the hall. He was feeling uncomfortable, but having seen Revelle hand his hat and gloves to one of the footmen, he did the same, and tried to look easy and at home. The way in which the footman glanced at his hat disquieted him.

"It only cost three-and-a-tanner!" he said to himself, "and I reckon Plush-breeches guessed as much from the look he gave it. Hobnobbing with lords and ladies is all very well for the Marquis, but it's a cut above me. Wish to goodness I was well out of it!"

The pompous butler ushered them into a great, oak-panelled room, the windows of which commanded a magnificent view.

Away in the distance, on the horizon, standing on an elevation, and peeping out from among trees, a grey-looking building was just visible.

"What's that place?" said Benny, as he inwardly wondered whether he ought to shake hands with, or only bow to Lord Normanhurst when he appeared.

"Bothered if I know!" answered Revelle.

As a matter of fact it was the County lunatic asylum!

That afternoon, in a closed cab, and in charge of two women in uniform, Vance, late of Mr. Mansfield's household, was taken there.

CHAPTER XIX.

How Scarsdale Succeeded in Writing a Letter to Esther.

"HERE, laddie, quick! Collar hold of 'em; slip 'em under yer blankets afore the screw comes along; write yer brief as best yer can, and then give it to me!"

Ben Needham, the convict nurse, under the pretence of arranging Scarsdale's bedding, had managed to slip into his hand a slip of paper, a crumpled envelope, and the stump of a pencil. Scarsdale's eyes lit up with a grateful light. There was no opportunity to thank him then, for the warder who paced the floor had turned and was moving back towards them. It was Scarsdale's last day in the ward. On the morrow he was to go back to labour and to the cells. Those days had only been a temporary reprieve. The degradation of the parti-coloured dress and the leg-chains still awaited him.

The chance of writing a letter to Esther had come at last. He lay there, his heart throbbing fiercely as he clutched the precious treasures beneath the coverlet—an inch of pencil, a dirty strip of paper, a crumpled, thumb-marked envelope; but, to a convict, treasures worth more than their weight in gold.

But with lynx-eyed warders moving around, it would be no easy matter to write, and he fidgeted uneasily in his bed. It was his last chance, too. To-morrow—ah, but he would not think of that now.

Cautiously he flattened out the strip of paper under the coverlet so as not to lose a moment when the opportunity came.

"Cynthia's Confessions" grow more astounding each week.

Digitized by Google

Again Needham drew near to the bed.

"Laddie," he whispered, with motionless lips, "stand by to write. Turn over on your side, and you'll have less chance of bein' spotted. I've given the champion kidder the tip, and in a minute or two something 'ill happen as 'ill occupy the attention of the screws. Don't you take no notice, but go on writin' for all you're worth!"

Two warders were on duty, one sitting at a table at the end of the ward; the other patrolling to and fro.

Scarsdale glanced down along the row of beds, with their strangely contrasted occupants, and wondered what it was that was going to happen. He did not have to wait long before his curiosity was satisfied.

A moment later, from the far end of the ward, rang out a wild yell, suggestive of excruciating pain.

In an instant both the warders and a number of the convict nurses were hurrying across the ward towards the bed from which the startling cries had come, but before they could reach it the occupant had sprung to his feet with a yell, and, flinging himself on to the floor, proceeded to writhe and struggle in a series of spasmodic convulsions. It was hard to believe, even though he had been forewarned, that the man's suffering was only assumed, and Scarsdale, for a moment forgetting the letter, could not take his eyes from off the struggling figure. Then, remembering that every second was precious, he turned over on to his side, his back turned towards the commotion, and began to scrawl in feverish haste a pencilled message. Every eye was fastened on the man who was still desperately struggling on the floor. The warders were fully occupied in holding him down until the doctor should arrive. Scarsdale was unobserved. The conditions were not favourable to writing. His position was cramped, the paper thin, and more than once the pencil penetrated through. He had a thousand things to write, and yet he knew how brief his time was.

"My own love," he scrawled. his heart fiercely pulsing as he pencilled the words, "day and night you are in my thoughts. The memory of your love lightens the darkness. I still hope—I wait and hope. Prison shall not kill my love. Esther, Esther, my own dear love. God bless you and keep you from harm! The bearer of this letter has been a kind friend to me. He will find means to see you and give you messages that I cannot write. If you do not hear from me through Tom for some time, do not be anxious. My privilege of writing is suspended for the present. I am well and strong. Oh, God! If I could only see you—if I could only hear your voice! No, I am not despairing. My love, my love, let us wait and hope!—ALEC."

There was no time to think of nicely-turned phrases; he had written down his fevered thoughts, and the scrawled words seemed to reflect his unselfish nature. He would have her believe that he was well and strong and full of hope. He would keep from her all knowledge of those frightful hours of darkness and despair, of the utter hopelessness that sometimes prevailed and threatened to trample out what buoyancy of nature was left to him.

Thrusting the letter into the envelope that Ben Needham had provided for him, Scarsdale had barely time to write Esther's address upon it before the hurried entrance of the prison-doctor brought to an end the paroxysms of the convict patient who had so successfully diverted general attention. The man was an old and experienced "lag," and knew perfectly well that a doctor is not so easily deceived, and is always on the look-out for cases of shamming and malingering among prisoners, consequently he ceased his convulsions, and, displaying all the symptoms of utter prostration, suffered himself to be placed in his bed again. And even the doctor could not definitely make up his mind whether it had been a case of an epileptic seizure or only of shamming. The ward quickly resumed its ordinary appearance, and Scarsdale, clutching the letter beneath the bedclothes, waited for an opportunity to deliver it to Ben Needham. It was some time before Needham approached the bed. When, he did so he cast one quick, stealthy glance down the ward; then the letter passed into his hand, and, with a cleverness that would have done credit to a conjurer, he slipped it up his sleeve. He

Where Women Outnumber Men.

In Mumbles—a little village near Swansea—there are six hundred more females than males out of a total population of four thousand. In hundreds of towns and villages throughout England and Wales, women, by reason of their weaker frame, have a preponderance—if not in numbers at least in the ailments and diseases to which flesh is heir. It is because of this and the great number of women who have found Bile Beans a veritable boon that the latter preparation has been so widely adopted as a woman's remedy. There are few women who at times do not suffer from anæmia and debility, and the following case will show how effective Bile Beans are in these diseases. Miss May Musson, of Breach Road, Marlpool, speaking to a *Derbyshire Advertiser* reporter said: "A short time back anæmia, indigestion, and debility had so reduced me that I could not take a morsel of solid food. The result of this was that I lost all strength, and could not walk even a short distance without feeling exhausted. No matter what kind of food I tried the effect was just the same, and caused me great distress. I had severe pain in the left side which hurt me whenever I moved; and, what with one thing and another, I was far more like an old woman nearing the end of her days than a woman of twenty-two years.

I was told that I had an enlarged liver. Whatever it was that occasioned the pain I suffered, it seemed as if nothing I took would do me any good. I saw Bile Beans advertised in the newspaper and made up my mind to give them a trial. When I had finished the first box I felt better and got more. Each box of Beans made me better and better until the neighbours began to notice how vastly I was improving. First one and then another would say "You do look different." Whatever I look I know I feel different. Never in all my life have I felt so well as I do at the present moment. I am sure I owe my life to Bile Beans." It is by effecting such cures as the above that Bile Beans have made their world-wide reputation. They are without doubt superior to all known medicines for indigestion, anæmia, dizziness, liver and kidney disorders, constipation, piles, headache, debility, nervousness, female ailments, skin eruptions, pimples, and all blood impurities. All chemists stock them or you may obtain them from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119 London Wall, London, E.C., by sending prices one and three halfpence or two and nine.

GIVEN AWAY
With the Double Summer No. of
HOME NOTES
(No. 441)
PAPER PATTERN
of a BOY'S
AMERICAN BLOUSE
and KNICKERS.
Of all Bookstalls and Newsagents
PRICE 2D.

moved away again, and Scarsdale gave a great sigh of thankfulness, though even now his doubts were not yet at rest. It was one thing to have written and passed the letter to Needham, it was another for Needham to convey it beyond the barrier of the prison-walls. But the very act of writing the letter, and the hope that it might ultimately reach its destination, had cheered Scarsdale and gave him comfort. What seems trivial and most unimportant to us who lead an every-day life, assumes a different proportion to the man hemmed about by prison-walls and yet more isolating prison regulations.

When Ben Needham again approached the bed it was to wish Scarsdale good-bye. After that night they were not likely to meet again. On the morrow Scarsdale was going back to the cells; only a few days now stood between Needham and his liberty.

"Laddie," whispered the convict-nurse, his rough, scarred features twitching a little, "don't you worrit yourself about that brief; I shall git it through right enough, or my name ain't Ben. I've had a look at the address, I shall give it to the lady myself. Any messages, laddie?"

The ex-burglar, the man who had been bred and born in an atmosphere of crime, but in whose heart the spark of goodness still burnt, felt his eyes grow dim as he saw the blood ebb and flow on the young, haggard face.

"You can trust me," he went on, "I'm a'most old enough to be your father, laddie, and if them messages is a bit sentimental, you needn't think I shall be smiling at yer, laddie. I wasn't always so old as I am now. The first time I went to quod—it was five stretch—I left a sweetheart behind me. That's thirty year ago—they transported yer then, and I was shipped to Gibraltar—and I ain't forgot my feelings yet!"

"Tell her first," whispered Alec Scarsdale, almost inaudibly, "that I love her!"

"Aye, laddie," said the convict huskily.

"And tell her then that I am well and strong, and hopeful!"

Ben Needham nodded his head.

"And tell her then that the knowledge that she believes me innocent is—is life to me!"

The prison ward had not yet been lighted. A gathering shadow had fallen across the bed. The darkness had favoured the conversation. Ben Needham cleared his throat with a little cough.

"I'll give them messages," he murmured. "as you spoke 'em. I shan't forgit; the words is cut clean into my heart!"

"And then tell her that I believe that truth will out in the end; that the man who has made me suffer will be brought, sooner or later, to justice. And tell her when she sees Tom—she will know who I mean when you speak of Tom—that I thank him from the bottom of my heart for all he has done. For I know that he is working for me!"

"Aye, laddie!"

"And that's all. Only, if she questions you, don't let her know what a fearful life one leads here, Needham. Smooth it over; tell her that it's more comfortable than people think; that the things one reads about in papers and stories are written for sensation; that prison life is not so bad as it's painted—I would not have her know the truth."

"You can trust me to do that for you."

Ben Needham moved away from the bed. One of the warders had taken it into his head to perambulate the ward. When Needham again returned to the bed it was so dark that he could barely distinguish the outline of Scarsdale's features.

"Laddie," he whispered, in a voice hoarse with emotion, "quick, before they light up, give us a grip of your hand, I shan't see you again after to-night. But I shall see her, and I'll give them messages. Don't give in, laddie, and keep up a stout heart!"

The two hands met in a strong grip.

"Thank you, Needham, thank you for all you've done. I can only thank you!"

"Here comes the screw," was the hoarse reply; "laddie, good-bye!"

Then the warder's voice rang out, ordering those convicts on duty to fall in and file up. The ward was lit up now. As Scarsdale watched Ben Needham march out with the rest, a great feeling of loneliness came over him. During his time in prison he had made but two friends, Gentleman Jack and Needham, only to lose them both. If he envied he did not grudge them their freedom. Faults he had in plenty, but selfishness was not to be numbered among them.

Next morning, after his breakfast, two warders marched to Scarsdale's bed, and he was ordered to dress himself. The short respite was over. When he had donned the hideous, parti-coloured dress, and the doctor had signed a formal document discharging him from the hospital, he was marched to the chain-room, or, as it is called by the prisoners, "the jeweller's shop." Here the ignominy that had only been postponed was carried out. The leg-chains were riveted to his limbs. He was not permitted to labour that day, but was taken to his new cell, situated in the strongest part of the prison. When a prisoner is considered a dangerous character it is customary to continually change his quarters, and thus minimise the possibilities of escape. Before entering it he was strictly searched. When, in the course of the day, he was taken out to exercise, a warder accompanied him from the cell to the parade-ground. Here he took his place among convicts fettered like himself, and wearing either the black and yellow or black and drab dresses. There was no chance of conversation. They walked in single file, the only sound the metallic jangling of fetters. Round and round the parade-ground they wearily tramped, a grey, dull sky overhead and frowning walls and barred windows on every side—nothing to break the awful monotony. Then back again, some to labour at oakum picking, but Alec Scarsdale to his cell. Every hour the door was flung open, and the warder on duty inspected the cell. And when night came it brought no rest. The fetters chafed his limbs, and every time he turned on the hard bed, emitted a dismal, clanking sound. Twice during the night, when he had almost dozed off into a restless sleep, a lamp was thrust under the aperture at the bottom of the cell door, completely illuminating the cell, and a warder glanced through the spy-hole to see that all was right. Scarsdale was experiencing what was meant by "special orders." And he had been sentenced to six months "special orders." And it meant the postponing of all chance of escape for six months.

Escape! The thought was always with him. It had almost become a form of mono-mania!

CHAPTER XX.

How Seaton Revelle Manœuvred to be Alone with Esther.

"Well, Tom, well, Freddie, you young rascals, have you any news for me?"

The two young constables, both in mufti, and both looking as if they had devoted special attention to their personal appearance, were seated in "Mr. Penworthy's" sitting-room at Woodbine Cottage. Crump was leaning back in an arm-chair, his trusty pipe between his teeth.

Tom Jackson glanced at Fred Wilton; Fred Wilton glanced back at his comrade.

"Go on, Tom!"

"Well," said Tom, "we've both of us got on speaking terms with Railton!"

Crump nodded his head approvingly.

"He took to nodding to us when he met us. Then we sort of began to exchange a few words."

"A very quiet, self-contained sort," said Fred, "but he explained to me that he finds it a bit lonely down here, and he's fond of quiet, respectable companionship. He's on friendly terms with Lord Normanhurst's butler, he told me, but The Towers is a long way off. And he invited me and Tom, any time we're off duty, to drop in and see him at The Firs. His master has no objection to him receiving friends, provided that they're respectable!"

Crump's eyes were twinkling. Fred winked at Tom. He was acquainted with his uncle's mannerisms.

If you do not want SHORT STORIES after you have read it, please give it away to one who is not a reader.

Digitized by Google

PERSONAL MAGNETISM.

A College, Chartered Under State Laws, with a Capital of $100,000, for the Purpose of Teaching Personal Magnetism and Hypnotism by Correspondence.

EVERYBODY MAY NOW LEARN.

Ten Thousand Copies of a Valuable Work on These Sciences to Be Given Away to Advertise the College.

The American College of Sciences of Philadelphia, Pa., is a novel institution. It is chartered under State laws, with a capital of $100,000, for the purpose of teaching Personal Magnetism, Hypnotism, Magnetic Healing, etc., by correspondence.

At an expense of over $5,000 the college has issued a remarkable work on these sciences, ten thousand copies of which will be given away absolutely free. The book is elegantly illustrated with the most expensive engravings, and it is decidedly the finest and most comprehensive work of its kind ever published. It is the product of the combined talent of thirty distinguished hypnotic specialists and scientists. It thoroughly explains all the the hidden secrets of Personal Magnetism, Hypnotism, Magnetic Healing, etc. It is full of surprising experiences and makes many startling disclosures in regard to the use and possibilities of this secret power.

The college absolutely guarantees that anyone can learn these sciences in a few days at home, and use the power without the knowledge of his most intimate friends.

The reporter asked for the names and addresses of some of the pupils so that he might communicate with them personally. Several hundred were offered, from which the reporter selected eighty-four. The replies received were more than sufficient to convince the most sceptical in regard to the wonderful benefits to be derived from this mighty power. There were absolutely no failures. All had learned to make practical use of the sciences. The following extracts are taken at random from the letters, for the benefit of readers:

J. H. Schneller, 1412 Avon Street, La Cross, Wisconsin, writes: "Hypnotism truly revealed the secrets of life and the mysteries of nature. My own father could not have convinced me of its wonderful power if I had not actually tested it for myself. I consider a knowledge of it invaluable to those who wish to get the most out of life; to those who wish to achieve success and live up to the full measures of their possibilities."

Mrs. Effie M. Watson, Martinsville, Ind., writes: "Hypnotism opens the road to health, happiness, and prosperity. It should be studied by everyone. I would not part with my knowledge of it for any amount. The instructions have developed within me a force of character, an ability to influence and control people that I did not dream I could acquire."

J. W. Clinger, M.D., Springfield, O., writes: "I have used the methods of hypnotism taught by the American College of Sciences in two cases of difficult surgical operations with perfect success. It is a complete anæsthetic, and preferable to chloroform or ether. I acquired a practical knowledge of hypnotism in less than three days. The book is grand."

Rev. T. W. Butler, Ph.D., Idaho City, Idaho, writes: "I have cured a number of chronic cases of rheumatism, dyspepsia, and paralysis of long standing; have not had a single failure; I consider a knowledge of Personal Magnetism invaluable. The book has greatly increased my own powers."

Dr. W. P. Kennicut, 529 State Street, Binghamton, N.Y., writes: "I had long suffered from nervous prostration and dyspepsia. My case baffled all medical skill. I studied hypnotism from the American College of Sciences, and tried it upon myself with surprising results. In one week my stomach was better than it had been in thirty years. I could eat anything without the slightest distress. I can hypnotise myself in five minutes and sleep all night; have hypnotised a number of others."

The first ten thousand persons who write to the American College of Sciences will receive, absolutely free, the marvellous book that brought success to the above persons. It is intensely interesting from start to finish. It should be in every home. If you want a copy, address penny post-card to-day to the American College of Sciences, Department WL 19, 416-420 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa., U.S.A., and you will receive the book by return mail.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

Sick Headache, Constipation, Wind and Pains in Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver, and Female Ailments.

SALE OVER SIX MILLION BOXES YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

FREE TO ALL

MR. H. STANSFIELD (from a photo).

A trial of an entirely new method of curing

RUPTURE,

the same method that cured Mr. H. Stansfield. No cumbersome steel truss, and no loss of time from work. Write to-day for free trial and for interesting literature, including a book containing many testimonials.

DR. W. S. RICE,

57 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

ESTABLISHED 1851.

BIRKBECK BANK,

Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London.

2½% DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS 2½%
repayable on demand.

The Birkbeck Almanack, with full particulars, post free.

FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager*

The Only Efficacious Substitute for Cod-liver Oil.

DEVONSHIRE CREAM

ABSOLUTELY PURE.
NO PRESERVATIVES USED.

(Really Genuine). In Patent Air-tight Tins.

¼-lb., 1/4; 1-lb., 2/4; 2-lb., 4/-, including Tin & Postage.

Mrs. CONYERS, Morchard Bishop, DEVON.

EIFFEL TOWER LEMON JELLY

We are Lemon experts—having personally visited the Messina Lemon Orchards to select the finest fruits for our celebrated Eiffel Tower Lemonade. We are now using our special knowledge to produce a most delicious Lemon Jelly. Pint packet, 3½d.

FREE SAMPLE, send to C. FOSTER CLARK & CO., Lemon Produce Importers, MAID ONE.

"NO BETTER FOOD."

Dr. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., &c.

Fry's PURE CONCENTRATED Cocoa

300 Gold Medals, &c.

Half a tea-spoonful is sufficient to make a cup of most delicious Cocoa.

"ALKAN"

CURES IN ONE MINUTE BY INHALATION

HEADACHE,
TOOTHACHE,
FACIAL NEURALGIA,
NEURALGIA OF THE EAR.

The Effect is Marvellous.

Of all Chemists and Stores, Price 2s. 9d. and 4s. 6d. per bottle.

Sent post paid from Depot to any part of the United Kingdom on receipt of price by the Proprietors:

THE ALKAN LTD., GENERAL DEPOT, 150 STRAND, LOND., W.C.

The Medical Editors of HEALTH write:

"Any remedy which will act as an immediate cure for the too common complaints of toothache, earache, and facial neuralgia will, we are sure, be hailed with acclamation. The 'Alkan' has been found to accomplish this result, if the directions forwarded therewith are fully carried out. The pain, if an ordinary case, will be relieved in less than a minute, and we strongly recommend those who are martyrs to the dolourcux and other painful facial complaints to invest in a bottle of this Water and test its virtues."

THE EFFECT IS MARVELLOUS.

P.O. should be made payable to "The Alkan Ltd.," and crossed Lloyd's Bank Ltd. (Law Courts Branch), and letters containing stamps registered.

"And," said Crump, "you will do so, both of you, when occasion presents itself. Does he manifest any interest in your official duties?"

Tom winked at Fred.

"He asked one or two casual questions about our beats and times on and off!"

Again Crump nodded his head.

"Tom, Freddie," the little man laughed chaffingly at them, "my old friend Tomlinson takes you, if I'm not mistaken, for a couple of—excuse the slang—a couple of M U G S This is very satisfactory, if not complimentary, but, my dear lads, it is far better to be taken for a mug than to be one. Tomlinson, or Railton as he is now, is bent on pumping you. Let him pump, and let yourselves be pumped. You two lads have made a distinct step in the right direction. Good! I'm pleased with you both!"

"His master," said Tom, "has bought a lot of tickets for the concert to-night in the schoolroom. And Railton, knowing we're both off duty, has given each of us a ticket, and asked us to go with him. Miss Esther"—his face flushed a little—"is going to sing!"

A look of concern crossed Crump's face. For a moment he looked quite distressed.

"How very provoking!" he exclaimed. "But wait a minute, in what part of the room will you and Railton be sitting, do you know?"

Tom Jackson pulled out a ticket and glanced at it.

"The sixth row!"

"Ah, that's all right!" Crump heaved a great sigh of relief. "You see, Pollie, Mrs. Cobb's little grand-daughter, was most anxious to go to the concert as a great treat, and, well, I've persuaded her grandmother, and I'm going to take her into the gallery. That will be all right. I think I can trust myself to avoid Tomlinson. Anyhow, I'll risk it. Pollie's heart would be broken if anything happened to prevent her going to the concert. Freddie, you young rascal, what are you winking at!"

"Was I?" said Fred, a little confusedly.

"You were, sir!" said Crump, almost severely. "It is not so very long ago, sir, that I was taking you and your little sister to entertainments, and a pretty handful you both were to look after. And now I catch you winking disrespectfully at your old uncle. You haven't improved a bit!"

Then the little man chuckled and proceeded to give his young lieutenants certain confidential instructions which were listened to very earnestly.

"And now pack off, both of you, and don't be afraid to let Tomlinson continue to take you for M U G S. I'm pleased with you both!"

He paused for a moment.

"And, by the bye, Tom, you've seen Miss Mansfield since I gave her that letter?"

"Yes"—the honest face flushed again—"yes, and—well, I only wish I'd another to send to her!"

It was some quarter of an hour after the constable's departure that Crump, holding Pollie's hand (Pollie in her Sunday best), left the cottage for the village. His kindly face was beaming all over as he listened to the little child as she prattled excitedly about the coming concert. And when, in her eagerness to get there, she insisted on running, Crump was constrained to break into a trot, too!

There had been a most *récherché* dinner that evening at The Firs. Revelle's guests were Lord and Lady Eliza Normanhurst, John Mansfield, and Esther. At first Benny had been ill at ease, but as the champagne circulated he gained more confidence, and became quite conversational and amusing. He was, in fact, the funny man of the party, yet he was never quite at his ease. The presence of Esther Mansfield was somehow, in spite of the champagne, a strain on his nerves. It was only after dinner that John Mansfield pleaded a headache as an excuse for not going on with the others to the concert.

When the party reached the room, a schoolroom and an entertainment-room combined, Tom Jackson and Fred Wilton were already in their seats. The silent Railton was between them. There was a hushed whispering at the entrance of the distinguished party. The vicar advanced to meet them.

Then suddenly Tom Jackson flushed scarlet. As Esther passed along she had seen him. She nodded and smiled at him.

Right away at the back of the gallery sat Crump. Pollie was beside him. He was holding one of her little hands. It was quite hot and moist with excitement.

"Oh, I do wish they'd begin!" whispered the child.

"We shan't have long to wait now, Pollie!"

Then Crump leant forward a little, and saw Tom and Freddie below, and who was sitting between them. He chuckled softly. Then he glanced at the front row. Revelle was seated between Lady Eliza Normanhurst and Esther Mansfield. He was talking to Esther. He was behaving absolutely like a gentleman, but, perhaps, like Benny, the champagne had affected him a little.

"I am so awfully sorry," he was saying, "that your father was not feeling up to the mark—couldn't come on with us. I told him that I would be responsible for seeing you safely home!"

His dark eyes seemed a little brighter than usual. Esther, for all her pallor, was looking singularly pretty. She was dressed simply, but in exquisite style.

"It's very kind of you, Mr. Revelle," she answered, "but there will be no need to trouble you. The carriage will be here for me!"

"But I told your father not to bother to send the carriage. You see, my brougham will be here!"

Esther's expression did not change, but she felt the look of admiration that was shining from his eyes.

"But will you excuse me for a minute. I want to see Faversham before the concert starts. He's round at the back with the artistes. You're wiser, Miss Mansfield, and prefer a comfortable seat in the audience till your turn comes!"

Having apologised also to Lady Eliza Normanhurst, Revelle made his way round to the back, where he found Benny with the other performers. He took him on one side.

"Look here," he whispered, "after the concert make yourself scarce! Walk back to The Firs!"

Revelle meant to be alone with Esther Mansfield when he drove her home after the concert.

(A splendid instalment next week.)

The Man of the Moment.

LORD KITCHENER:

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE.

By Horace G. Groser.

"A capital biography."—*Bookman.*

Price 2s. 6d., post free 2s. 9d.

"A book worth reading and keeping."
—*Bradford Observer.*

CROWNING THE KING.

An account of the Coronation of English Kings and Queens up to the Present Time, and a Description of what will take place at the Forthcoming Coronation of King Edward VII.

By Arthur H. Beavan.

Author of "Marlborough House and its Occupants," etc., etc. With 10 illustrations. Crown 8vo.

Price 2s. 6d., post free 2s. 9d.

PEARSON'S GOSSIPY GUIDE TO LONDON.

The Best. The Cheapest. The Most Attractive.

£500 FREE INSURANCE.

Price 1s., post free 1s. 3d.

Digitized by Google

IN CONFIDENCE

By MADGE MORRIS.

[I shall be glad to answer, to the best of my ability, any letters from readers dealing with affairs of the heart, tangles in domestic life, or points of etiquette. All communications must be addressed to me personally, c/o the Editor of SHORT STORIES.*]*

Silent Lovers.

"PRINCE" is rather a talkative young man, but when in the presence of his beloved finds it very difficult to speak at all for long periods. Whether it is that he has nothing to say, he doesn't know. What is he to do to remove this defect? Well, "PRINCE," I think you very likely make the common mistake amongst sweethearting couples in assuming that you must only talk about yourselves and your feelings when together, while when in other people's presence you would converse on general subjects. Perhaps the topic is easily exhausted so far as you both are concerned, hence your long silences.

❦❦❦

As a matter of fact your sweetheart should be one who opens your mind more than anyone else, and these silences rather suggest that you have not very much in common, or you would not find conversation so difficult. When next with her, try talking just as though she were an ordinary girl, and not your beloved, though there is no reason why you should not accompany your remarks with a squeeze, to show that you have not suddenly grown cold. I rather suspect that these silent love attachments have not very much solid basis, for those who are about to unite their lives should certainly have some interests in common besides themselves. Try talking on every subject you know anything about, and she must surely find something in which she is interested.

❦❦❦

Curiously enough, I know of two young people very devoted to each other, but the young man confessed to me candidly that, though deeply devoted to the girl, he could seldom talk on general subjects unless a third party were present, when he became suddenly brilliant. "PRINCE" might try the influence of the third person now and again, just to see if it is the case with him.

❦❦❦

The "Tyranny of Tears" Again.

"WILLIE" has been engaged six months, and has been constantly in his sweetheart's company. In fact, they have scarcely had one serious parting. However, he has now to go to America for three months, on important business. This his sweetheart says will break her heart, and every time she thinks of his departure she sheds tears. "WILLIE" is afraid she will make herself ill with fretting. Ought he to cancel the trip, even though doing so might injure his prospects?

❦❦❦

No, "WILLIE." You should not give up the trip, especially as you say it will advance your prospects. Your little girl's grief is very natural, but to encourage such conduct now would be a very serious mistake. You made the mistake in being too much with her since your engagement. You should have made several fairly long breaks in your meetings, in order to accustom her to your absence, and then your present departure would not have been felt so much. As it is, you must try and console her for your absence by letting her know how much it will benefit your position, and if you can get a friend of hers or a girl friend or relation of your own to look after her while you are away, it would be a good plan. But it would be very foolish to let mere sentimental considerations interfere with your prospects, and I think you will find she will soon reconcile herself to your temporary absence.

❦❦❦

Marriage Licenses.

AN ordinary marriage license, "RIGO," costs from £2 12s. 6d. to £3 3s. A special license allowing the marriage to take place in any church without either of the parties having previously resided in the parish costs something over £29.

❦❦❦

A Love Stealer.

I HAVE had two letters bearing in different ways on friendships between girls. "ADA" has known "MAUD" since childhood, and they have always been intimate friends. Recently "MAUD" met a very handsome and charming young man, who appeared to be in love with her. "ADA," however, suspects that he is really fonder of herself, though the knowledge of it would break "MAUD'S" heart, as she is desperately attached to the young man. How should "ADA" act?

❦❦❦

If "ADA" has any sense of the obligations of friendship she will not act at all. If she has been the intimate friend of "MAUD" since childhood she should banish altogether such a base thought as to try and steal her lover. She is quite possibly mistaken in her surmise that the man would like her better. She probably does not read his mind in the least. Girls often think they read men, but are in nine cases out of ten mistaken. If he is really fonder of "ADA" time will soon prove it. Meanwhile, her duty is to avoid all attempts or even thoughts of stealing her friend's lover.

❦❦❦

Prefers Her Girl Friend.

THE other letter tells me that "PERPLEXED" has been receiving attentions from a man for some time, but finds that she really prefers the society of a girl friend. She finds being made continual love to is nothing but a bore, and is much more partial to intimate conversations with those who are her mere friends. "PERPLEXED" would do very wrong to continue any such half-hearted attachment as that which exists between herself and this man.

❦❦❦

If she prefers her girl friend, she should cease receiving his attentions. It is only fair and honourable that she should do so. Give him up, "PERPLEXED," you evidently do not care very much for him. Perhaps later on the man will appear who will be to you both friend and lover. That is the sort of being for whom girls of your kind should seek.

❦❦❦

The Mischief-Maker Once More.

"HEARTBROKEN" writes to tell me that, through the mischief-making of a third person, he, some six months ago, separated from the girl whom he now finds he loves more than he ever imagined possible. Unhappily whenever he meets her she passes him in the most proud and cold manner, which "HEARTBROKEN" feels certain is only assumed. He wants to make it up. What shall he do? Well, the matter is quite a simple one. Just write and tell her that you would like to see her, and if she is a sensible girl she will again meet you, and you should be quite capable of managing the rest.

Printed by HORACE COX, Bream's Buildings, London, E.C., and published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

Good! it's Mason's

MASON'S EXTRACT of HERBS

THE BEST BEVERAGE TO TAKE WITH YOUR MEALS, AND AT ALL TIMES.
THE MOST SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN DURING WARM WEATHER.

A Physician states: "It assuages thirst, it is refreshing, and grateful to weak stomachs."

A 6d. Bottle of Extract makes 8 gallons. Bottle, post free, 9 stamps.

Manufacturers:
NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM.

You must try
E. & T.
PINK'S
JAMS
they are
Absolutely Pure

SYMONDS'

CYCLES AT H LF PRICE
Hundreds of policemen and constabulary ride Symonds' cycles, they are the best and cheapest. Warranted 2 years, prices £4 to £8, easy payments, full satisfaction. No matter who you are or what your business is, we will sell a cycle to you on easy payments, no guarantor required. Write for catalogue. Mention name of this paper. SYMONDS' LONDON STORES. 68 Hatton Garden, London.

SONGS COPIED.

Legible as print, 5d. page; transposed correctly, 6d. page. Mrs. CONYERS, Morchard Bishop, Devon. Recommended by the Marchioness of Waterford, Lady Arthur Hill, Miss Ellen Terry, etc.

RIDER AGENTS WANTED
One in each district to ride and exhibit latest model Sample Cycle
1902 Models £2.10 to £5.10
1900&1901 Models £1.5 to £3.0
We pay carriage and allow TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL. Every machine fully warranted. You can EARN A CYCLE by distributing catalogs for us or have the FREE USE of one for a little effort. Write for *Catalogs and our special offer*, using 2½d stamp or 1d post card. All accessories and sundries half English prices. Send for free sundry catalog. Address Dept. 311-B
MEAD CYCLE CO. Chicago, U. S. A.

THE PREPARATION THE PEOPLE SWEAR BY.
Mr. GEO. R. SIMS'
"TATCHO"
FOR THE HAIR AND FOR THE LACK OF HAIR.

A feature the public will have observed in the "Tatcho" Announcements is the publication of the Full Name and Address of the grateful user.

"Reason to be satisfied."
"Castries, St. Lucia, B. W. Indies, April 11th, 1902.
"I have every reason to be satisfied with 'Tatcho' and mean to recommend it strongly."—(Mrs.) H. MITCHELL.

"Superior to all."
"23 Albert St., Belfast, April 17th, 1902.
"I find 'Tatcho' superior to all other dressings."—(Mrs.) JANE SEMPLE.

"Excellent."
"Chetwynd, Bassett, Southampton, April 22nd, 1902.
"We all find 'Tatcho' excellent for our hair."—(Mrs.) A. BEATTY.

DISTRIBUTION OF TRIAL BOTTLES.
4/6 FULL-SIZE BOTTLE FOR 1/10 POST FREE.

To secure one of these Trial Bottles, apply to your Chemist or Stores, or write to us mentioning "Short Stories." Post your letter to "Tatcho" Offices, 81 Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C., accompanied with postal order for 1/10, and we will post to your address direct in plain package one of the special full size 4/6 bottles of Mr. Geo. R. Sims' "Tatcho."

"TATCHO" is a brilliant, spirituous tonic, the colour of whisky, free from all grease.
"TATCHO" is not a dye, and contains no colouring matter or any harmful ingredient.
"TATCHO" is sold by all Chemists and Stores throughout the world in bottles at 1s., 2s. 9d., and 5s., in addition to the special trial size referred to.

MASTERS' KEYLESS SIX PRIZE MEDAL SOLID SILVER LADIES' WATCH.

30/- 30/-

A Fully Jewelled Keyless Watch Warranted for Seven Years - £1 10 0

£1 10 0

honestly worth double.

Modern improvements and up-to-date methods have reduced the cost a half in the making of this watch. Ten years ago you would have had to pay 60/- for a keyless watch as good as the one we now offer you for 30/-.

You could not have a better or more reliable Watch than

MASTERS' 30/- SIX-PRIZE-MEDAL WATCH

and our popular credit system will allow you to own it and pay for it in small payments of

5/- PER MONTH.

SPECIAL CREDIT PAYMENT.

J. N. Masters Ltd. supply this watch on convenient monthly payments. First send 2/6 and watch will be sent you on approval. If satisfactory, send 2/6 more on receipt and 5/- each month for five months; or if you send the full amount we give you

A STERLING SILVER ALBERT FREE

as cash discount. Your money back if watch does not satisfy you and is returned at once.

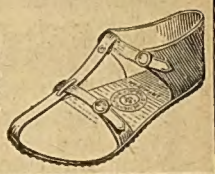
CATALOGUE (1,500 Illustrations) POST FREE.
AGENTS wanted. Write for particulars.

J. N. MASTERS LTD., Dept. 201, WATCHMAKERS, RYE, SUSSEX

A Boon

FOR SEASIDE AND COUNTRY WEAR.

"AMPHIBIAN" SANDALS.



The only Rubber Sandals. Children can wear them while paddling. The only healthy footgear. Develop and Preserve the natural beauty of the foot.

ALL CHILDREN SHOULD WEAR THEM

MACKINTOSH'S EXTRA CREAM TOFFEE

Is DELICIOUS! DELICIOUS!! DELICIOUS!!
PUREST OF THE PURE.
Sold Everywhere.
A Very Large Sample Packet sent post free for eight penny stamps
J. Mackintosh Ltd., The Toffee Mills, HALIFAX.
Wholesale dealers should stock this Toffee as it sells at sight.

"KKOVAH" JELLIES

FLAVORED ONLY WITH RIPE FRUIT JUICES.

SUTCLIFFE & BINGHAM Ltd. No 7, KKOVAH WORKS MANCHESTER

"MATCHLESS" METAL POLISH

Should you have any difficulty in obtaining supplies, Pots Ox Tins will be sent Postage Free, (with address of nearest Dealer) on receipt of P.O. or Stamps for 8d.

MANUFACTURED BY THE MATCHLESS METAL POLISH Co. LIVERPOOL

MAKE YOUR OWN DRESSES WITH EASE & PERFECTION

BY USING THE "REGINA" MAKE

Ready Made and Boned with Patent Fastenings and Adjustable Seams. Prices (including Sleeves and Stiffened Collar) 2/6, 3/9, 4/11, 6/-. Sizes over 26in. waist, 6d. extra.

To be had of all Leading Drapers or from
W. T. REDDELL, 28 MILTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.